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Monsieur Morve of Malaise.

A CRUISE UPON WHEELS:

THE

CHRONICLE OF SOME AUTUMN WANDERINGS AMONG THE DESERTED POST-ROADS OF FRANCE.

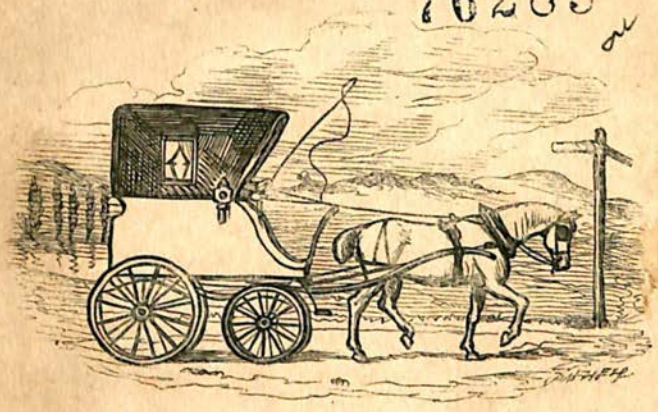
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BY

CHARLES ALLSTON COLLINS,

AUTHOR OF "THE EYE-WITNESS," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, AND ROUTLEDGE.

NEW YORK: 56, WALKER STREET.

1862.

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PREFACE.

THE Great Exhibition of 1862 is made the medium of putting forward for public approval all sorts of inventions and the results of all sorts of experiments. Artists, scientific men, engineers, mechanicians, and a vast crowd of other ingenious persons, send the issue of their studies to the International Exhibition. Literature stands almost alone in being unrepresented there.

Now I, too, like these other labourers, have made an experiment, the result of which it is my desire to exhibit for public approbation.

It is an experiment to write the history of a journey in which the interest attaches more to the persons who travel, than to the places which they travel through.

It is an experiment to treat mountains and rivers, and woods and towns, as, after all, but the background to a figure picture.

It is an experiment to give the full weight and value to all the smaller incidents of each day's pil-

grimage, and to be as confidential with the reader as may consist with that respect which should always be his due.

It is an experiment to seek to interest the public in a mode of travelling of which it has probably had no experience.

It is an experiment to use fictitious characters in a book of travels, and to describe their adventures in the third person.

These experiments, fresh from the laboratory, are now ready for trial, but for such there is no department open at the Great Exhibition.

It is a greater exhibition than that at Kensington to which an author sends his handiwork—an exhibition which has scarcely any limits, and whose area extends to every land where the English tongue is spoken. To it I would send this production of mine. It does not profess to be an invention which shall electrify mankind, or affect the existing condition or future prospects of Europe. It is an invention for occupying harmlessly those leisure hours which the busiest among us are obliged sometimes to allow themselves, and for taking off the thoughts of those who are in sorrow or anxiety from the trouble which presses most heavily in inactive moments.

London, April 3, 1862.

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A CRUISE UPON WHEELS.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN THAT SO SIMPLE A TRANSACTION AS THE PURCHASE OF A MAP MAY BE ATTENDED WITH VERY REMARKABLE RESULTS.

On the fifteenth day of the month of August, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty, and at about half-past nine of the forenoon, there appeared in the main street of Malaise a certain gentleman of England, residing temporarily at No. 56, Rue Loyale, in the town just mentioned, which is situated in the French dominions.

Now this gentleman, who, as has been said, was of English birth and descent, and bore the name of David Fudge, was a personage of simple tastes and of a retiring disposition. He was one who found more pleasure in studying men than in associating with them, one who liked better to be among the woods and fields than in great towns, one who prized but little the stakes which most men play their all to win; in a word, he was dreadfully unpractical, and would be capable of taking up his residence for a month in

some little French town with a strongly-flavoured moat surrounding it, if haply the place had some touch of antiquarian interest connected with it, or if it appealed to that turn for the romantic with which he was profoundly imbued.

It was some such feeling as this that had caused our gentleman and his friend and companion, Mr. Pinchbold, to stop short at the very threshold of a contemplated tour on the continent, and to take up their abode for six weeks at Malaise.

Has it ever happened to the reader to take a place, a person, an invention—an institution, in short, of any kind—under his protection, to stick to it for weeks, to be incommoded by it, to be rendered wretched by it, to be leading a miserable life in consequence of it, and yet to cling to it still? Nay, has it happened to him even to be wholly unconscious that his despair was attributable to the place, person, thing, invention, or other institution in question, till some slight circumstance has at length exposed to him the real cause of his unhappiness, and laid it bare before him with dazzling clearness?

Once again, has the reader ever, arriving at some place he has never visited before, taken a sudden fancy to it, committed himself to apartments for a month certain, gone on praising the locality and all that belongs to it, defending it against attack, ferreting out concealed attractions, attaching undue importance to them, undervaluing obvious defects just as much as he overvalues hardly discernible merits; has he gone on in this way for three weeks out of his month, and then suddenly broken down, found out his mistake, and pined in secret for deliverance?

Woe to him, who, arriving in the dead of night at the town of Malaise—it is easily found by him who will take boat at Dover and steer nearly due south for some two-and-twenty miles—woe to him who, hearing the carillon of bells chime forth the hour of midnight as he crosses the Place d'Armes, takes it suddenly into his head that Malaise is a delightful old place, and that a man might do worse than take up his abode there for some time.

It is not so. A man may not do worse. The man who has chanced upon Malaise at midnight, and come to the conclusion just recorded, will find (the day after he has committed himself irrevocably to a suite of apartments) that he could not have done worse, if he had tried.

If you happen to hit upon the exact time—apparently about one hour in six weeks—when the tide is up, if you happen to take the one tolerable walk along the ramparts, if you happen to arrive just when the fair is being held in the Place d'Armes, and if the weather happens to be for that day satisfactory, then it may chance that you will be (like Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold) the victim of this evil town, and will fall into its malignant clutches helplessly. Then when you walk forth with the key of your apartments in your pocket, will Malaise wear a wholly different aspect, and will—it is a characteristic of French bargains—lose no time in letting you know what a mistake you have made.

When a town has a port which emits incessant odours, a city-ditch surrounding it on all sides with a flavour several degrees stronger than even that of the port, when every gutter in every street is a smaller

edition—in a concentrated form—of the city-ditch, when a neighbourhood is without walks, when the sea is hopelessly shut out from access by miles of intricate harbour, then may the city of which these are the characteristics be pronounced detestable, and its freedom—if that phrase implies that you are free to escape from it—be coveted by all right-minded persons.

Now both Mr. Fudge and Mr. Pinchbold were the victims of a fancy which they had taken to Malaise on first arriving at it, and were, though curiously enough they had not acknowledged it to each other, or, perhaps, even to themselves, both suffering from a three weeks' residence in a town the characteristics of which have been detailed above. For the rest, the two were well-matched companions, and had nothing to complain of in each other. It was not the first time that they had been thus thrown together. Friends of long standing, partners years before of that great event in a man's life, the first continental experience, they were bound together further by a similarity of tastes, and, perhaps, more than all by a certain dissimilarity of character. When two men ride on a horse one must ride behind, and it is a question whether a great degree of intimacy and harmony can exist between two persons unless one does to a certain extent acknowledge the other as his superior. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that in the case we are considering the conduct of affairs was mainly in the hands of the elder of these two gentlemen, Mr. David Fudge, and that the other looked up to him, believed in him, and was ever ready to be guided by him.

There never was such a strange complication of elements as were brought together to form the character of Francis Pinchbold. If he had not, during the first ten years of his life, been systematically spoilt by a sensitive mother, and frightened out of his wits by a boisterous father, who laughed at him and bullied him by turns, he would have grown up a more useful member of society than he was; been more uniformly happy, perhaps, himself; but he would also have been less keenly alive to many sources of pleasure, and would certainly never have been thought queer and remarkable enough as a character to find a place in these pages. He was, to use an old quotation, everything by turns—rash and timid; irritable and long-suffering; irresolute and determined; and in a thousand other ways inconsistent; while (to go on with the hackneyed quotation) he was nothing long; unless it was that he was conscientious, faithful, and true always. But perhaps the most salient point of all in the character of him whom we are thus examining was the strange combination of excessive nervousness and sensitiveness to danger, with a singular aptitude for getting into situations of risk and peril. He was always in a state of woe and alarm about something or other, and was no sooner relieved from this source of apprehension than he found out another and plunged into it headlong. Croker was not so great an alarmist as our friend, nor so swift to find out that everything was going wrong. Yet it was difficult to say whether Pinchbold was altogether a slave to timidity, or whether there were some latent elements of courage lurking within him. A delicate frame, however, an excessive nervousness, a keen sense

of danger, a morbid incapability of bearing pain, these things it is as certain that he possessed, as that he had a heart that was worth a Jew's ransom, and a constitution that was not worth twopence.

Now, most people would expect that, because it has been said above that there was a certain dissimilarity between the character of Pinchbold and his friend, that therefore the nature of David Fudge was of the sternest order. But it was not so. It has been mentioned at the commencement of this chapter that he was a man of somewhat unpractical tendency, and truly alive to the pleasures of the romantic. He was only *more* consistent, more uniformly courageous, more firm of nerve, than his friend, and he was, at the same time, more cautious, and though less disturbed when in a difficulty than Pinchbold, was also more prudent about getting into one, and less likely to become involved in scrapes than the other. But enough has been said now of the characters of both the one and the other, and we may leave them to develop themselves in the course of this narrative. It is only necessary further to say that Mr. Pinchbold, to complete his inconsistencies, had been brought up to the law without having an atom of vocation for that profession, and that he had a small independence which left him at liberty to neglect it as much as he liked. Mr. David Fudge was a professional author, but one who, working chiefly in anonymous publications, had as yet done nothing to attract public attention to his somewhat remarkable name. Having mentioned that of these two gentlemen Mr. Fudge was the elder by four years, and was himself three-

and-thirty, we need at present say no more about them and may proceed at once to business.

It happened, then, on the morning—the date of which has been set down at the beginning of this chapter—that Mr. David Fudge, when he went out (it being his turn) to purchase the rolls for breakfast, saw in the window of the chief bookseller's and stationer's shop of Malaise, what appeared to be a small volume in paper covers of a yellow hue. It turned out, however, on inspection, to be a folded map, with this inscription outside it:—

NOUVELLE CARTE

DE FRANCE,

PAR DÉPARTEMENTS

INDIQUANT

LES CHEMINS DE FER, LES ROUTES DES POSTES,

AVEC LES DISTANCES EN KILOMÈTRES,

LES NOUVELLES DIVISIONS MILITAIRES, LES ARCHEVÊCHÉS

ET ÈVÊCHÉS, &c. &c.

PAR DUSSEE BERTHE,

GEOGRAPHE.

An economist of no mean order by nature, and also by circumstances rendered almost parsimonious in his habits, it was a long time before Mr. Fudge could justify in his mind the purchase of this map, which his soul coveted. He would perhaps never have bought it at all if it had not happened that, just as he had turned away from the window, and was passing the door of the shop, the proprietor, Monsieur Carton, coming out to sniff the morning air, actually

jostled against him, and then with profuse apology stepped out into the street, as if to make way for Mr. Fudge's entry into the shop. In short, he seemed to take it for granted that our economist was going to make a purchase.

"Here are four rolls, half-a-pound of butter, a pound of bacon, and two eggs," said Mr. Fudge, on his return home, and laying each of the articles named on the breakfast-table as he spoke. "Is Agnes the abhorrent on the premises?"

This Agnes was a servant whom the two bachelors had hired to attend to their household wants. She was called a "femme de ménage," came every morning and went away in the evening, taking her meals also, as well as her repose, at her own home. A certain fluey appearance about her hair, a superhuman ugliness, a habit of asking for sous to make purchases of inscrutable wares, which she alleged were necessary for the ménage, a tendency to put down her employers on every occasion by disparaging everything which they bought—all these things combined, caused her powers of aggravation to be of a high order, and made her, especially in the eyes of Mr. Fudge, an object of detestation and alarm.

"She is not only on the premises," said Mr. Pinchbold, in a low tone, "but in the room." And indeed, on looking sharply round, Mr. Fudge found this aggravating personage immediately behind him, and engaged in performing one of her choicest feats of aggravation.

It was the practice of Agnes the abhorrent, whenever either of her employers made a purchase, to take it up, and, being excessively near-sighted, to hold it

close to one of her eyes in order to examine it. Having protracted this scrutiny to the utmost limits of time that could be given to the purpose, she would either utter some remark calculated to deteriorate the market value of the commodity very considerably, or else would bear it off to the kitchen with a smile which intimated a knowledge of some hidden defect in the article which was too dreadful to be mentioned. Sometimes, too, she would conclude her examination with a deep sigh, which was a thing of even more dire and sinister augury than the smile. It was with such a profoundly-drawn inspiration that this fearful woman now terminated her inspection (at an inch and a half from her nose) of Mr. Fudge's bacon, after which she withdrew with it to the kitchen.

"When do you hate Agnes most?" Mr. Fudge inquired of his friend, as they sat down to breakfast.

"When she looks close at the things we buy," answered Mr. Pinchbold, without a moment's hesitation.

"I hate her most," said Mr. Fudge, who, as has been already hinted, was of a somewhat parsimonious habit, "I hate her most when she asks for three sous to buy soft soap."

"You are a screw, Fudge," remarked Mr. Pinchbold.

"I am an economist, Pinchbold," was the answer; "a screw," added Mr. F., as he pulled the map which he had just bought out of his pocket, "would not have made this useless purchase. I bought it this morning at Monsieur Carton's."

"I delight in a map," said Mr. Pinchbold, eagerly

opening the one in question, and spreading it out upon the floor. "I like to pick out all sorts of strange lonely-looking places, and imagine what they are like. Look here," he continued, sprawling over the map, and pointing at a spot on it with his pencil, "Ancy le Franc;" "fancy the dulness of Ancy le Franc. Tonnerre, again—the French for thunder—what an awful place that must be. Oh, Fudge," he cried, presently, turning suddenly round, "let us go somewhere. Why, in the name of goodness, don't we travel?"

"I have," said Mr. Fudge, "such a detestation of the act of travelling. I hate a railway-station with an indescribable hatred. Travelling has lost to me almost all its attractiveness since railways were thought of, and I can hardly understand any one wanting to take a journey unless it is on business. It is not travelling at all, it is getting into a chamber of fidgets at one station, and getting out of it at another. The very aspect of a station takes away all the interest of a place I arrive at. Then think of the luggage, the struggles at junctions, the changes of carriages just when you have got all those inevitable things which you always carry in your hand stowed away. Think of our getting into a carriage where we are not wanted, where we should find only two places left, where we should stumble in over objecting legs, and have to sit for six hours with a pile of coats, a hat-box, a carpet-bag, a paper of provisions, and a bundle of sticks in our laps. Think," said the economist, "of the incessant fees—the fiacres at stations, the catching and missing of trains. No, Pinchbold, I cannot stand it—I really cannot stand it."

Mr. Pinchbold seemed daunted for a moment by his companion's description of the miseries of a journey by train, and was silent for some moments. Presently, however, he returned to the charge.

"But is there no other way," he said, "in which we could travel? Why couldn't we go, like the people in Mr. James's romances, on horseback?"

"Because the expense of buying and keeping a couple of horses would be something tremendous; because we should never find two that would do; because there would be nowhere to put the luggage."

"Saddle-bags," murmured Mr. Pinchbold, faintly.

"Never do," said Mr. Fudge. "Never do at all."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what *would* do," cried the other. "Suppose we were to get a cabriolet and a horse, and drive—say twenty miles each day. Fancy how delightful that would be, with nobody to control us; starting when we liked, resting when we liked; staying where we liked, and as long as we liked; we should be free, perfectly free."

"I question whether anybody is perfectly free," Mr. Fudge put in; "but I must own that the notion of the cabriolet-journeying comes very near to my idea of liberty. It would be tremendously expensive, though."

"Not a bit of it," argued Mr. Pinchbold, "supposing the first outlay once over——"

"Which is supposing a good deal," interrupted Mr. Fudge.

"The first outlay over," continued Mr. Pinchbold, "the rest would cost nothing; less than living here or anywhere else. Those country inns are so cheap. Oh, it would be very delightful. Fancy the strange

melancholy places we should arrive at, the wild scenery we should pass through. Here is the map of France before us," Mr. P. went on, pointing to it as it lay on the floor; "let us choose our route, buy our horse——"

"Buy our horse," said Mr. Fudge, musingly, in parenthesis.

"Get our cabriolet," continued the eloquent Pinchbold, "and start."

Such was the proposal of Mr. Pinchbold.

The conversation which succeeded it was a long one, and was in its turn followed by many more. It was one of the qualities of Mr. Pinchbold, and was a part of that mixture of rashness and timidity by which he was characterized, that he had no sooner proposed any scheme, or started any project, than he suddenly perceived all its dangers or disadvantages, and proceeded to dwell on these as freely as he had done before on the pleasures connected with his plan. Mr. Fudge, who knew the weakness of his friend well, was therefore in nowise astonished, when in the course of the day succeeding the morning which we have described, Mr. Pinchbold began to hazard a few remarks apparently in disparagement of the journey, of which he had spoken in such rapturous terms.

It so happened that on the afternoon of the day whose morning we have been all this time occupied with, our two friends, in the course of their walk, were just passing through the gates of Malaise at the moment when a struggle of a somewhat alarming kind between a horse and his driver, was going on in front of the portcullis. The animal in question was a young and fiery beast, which had apparently been more accustomed to the sound of its footsteps on

the hard road than on the resounding wood of a drawbridge, and every time its hoofs descended with a hollow thump, it plunged and reared in a manner that threatened to upset the heavy cart in which it was placed. At last, responding to a tremendous application of the driver's whip, the animal rushed furiously forward and disappeared with its load behind it in the tunnel-like entrance of the fortifications.

"A nasty hot brute," observed Mr. Fudge to his friend, as they walked on after observing this little incident.

Mr. Pinchbold was silent for a time, and when he spoke it was with a certain hesitation in his manner that argued a condition of mind the reverse of confident.

"With regard to horses?" asked Mr. P.

"Well, what with regard to them?"

"Why, with regard to our notion of the journey in the cabriolet. I'm afraid we should have a great difficulty in finding a horse that would be suited to our purpose."

"There is no doubt we should," replied his friend.

"The horse," said Mr. Pinchbold, making a general remark, "is an awful animal."

"Not always," replied Mr. Fudge, laughing.

"I don't know," rejoined the other, "when you come to think of it. The strength, the capabilities of doing mischief. Why he can bite, kick, rear, fall back upon you——"

"Not the last, in a carriage," interposed Mr. Fudge.

"I don't know that," continued Pinchbold. "I don't know that, Fudge. At all events he can fling himself from side to side. Then he can run away.

He can bolt down a hill with a bridge at the bottom of it, and dash the carriage to pieces against the parapet. Oh! Fudge," repeated Mr. Pinchbold, "oh! Fudge, Fudge, a horse is an awful animal."

"Well," said the gentleman thus appealed to, "do you wish the idea to be given up? Only, if you do, say so, my dear fellow, at once, for if I once make a move in a project which I like the notion of as much as I do this, I know I shall never be able to abandon it."

"Oh, don't let's abandon it," said Mr. Pinchbold; "but there *are* some tremendous things connected with it, are there not? We should have fearful things to encounter—let me see," continued Mr. Pinchbold, as the two friends seated themselves on some timber by the roadside (they had now got well out of the town). "Let me see; first of all, there would be the dangers with the horse—a biting horse, a kicking horse, a rearing horse, a jibbing horse, a shying horse, a bolting horse, a tumbling-down horse, a horse that was devilish in the stable, a horse that was difficult to harness, a horse—a horse——"

"That will do for the horse," remarked Mr. Fudge; "get on to the other dangers."

"There would be dangers connected with losing our way, getting benighted, having to put up at some obscure auberge, where persons who looked as well off as we do, had never been seen before. What awful places," continued Mr. P., warming to his subject, "we might have to put up at! Why, the roads now must be more deserted and lonely than they ever were before. I never thought of that. The railroads must have taken all the traffic off them; and as to the inns, nobody can ever stop at them at all. Think of

the cut-throat places we should arrive at, with ill-looking men playing at billiards, and staring wildly at us. Think of the disused hotels, with landlords —desperate characters—who, finding themselves on the brink of ruin, would seize any opportunity of enriching themselves that came in their way. Think of the other dangers connected with those inns; why," said Mr. Pinchbold in a mysterious tone, "to take another aspect of the thing altogether, think of the dangers from copper saucepans."

"Copper saucepans?" repeated Mr. Fudge.

"Copper saucepans," continued Mr. P., "long disused, and which would have contracted verdigris; these might be used in cooking our food, and——"

"Nay," interrupted Mr. Fudge, "you are going too far now; never mind the saucepan dangers. What else is there?"

"Footpads," said Mr. Pinchbold. "Those deserted roads are more apt for banditti than they ever were before. Imagine the ruffians in blue blouses, who hearing of us at the house where we passed the night, would get a start of us in the morning, and waylay us on the road. Have you thought of all these things, Fudge?"

"I have thought of some of them," replied that gentleman; "but I think you exaggerate a little the alarming qualities of the men in the blue blouses."

"They are a truculent-looking race," urged Pinchbold.

"Well, as I said before," continued Mr. Fudge, "if you want the project abandoned, you have only to speak; now is the time."

"Oh, don't let's abandon the project," said Pinchbold, once more; "only it's very tremendous."

And so alternately entreating that the journey might take place, and enlarging on all the horrors connected with it, did Francis Pinchbold continue to perplex himself during the remainder of the walk. The two friends rambled on for some distance, and then arriving at a little village, which was a kind of suburb of Malaise, they determined to take the omnibus which ran every half hour to and from the town.

"Now," said Mr. Fudge, as they approached this vehicle, "the guard of this omnibus is a kind of man who would be likely to know where one could meet with a horse. If I ask him about the subject as we ride back, the first step will be taken, and we must go through with it."

"Oh, good heavens, Fudge!" said Mr. Pinchbold, turning very pale; "don't throw the responsibility of it upon me. What a fearful state of things this is!"

"Very well, then, we'll give it up," said Mr. Fudge, desperately.

"Oh, no, don't let's give it up," cried Pinchbold.

"Then we must go through with it," returned the other.

"Do as you like," replied Mr. Pinchbold, as they seated themselves in the carriage; "but a horse *is* a fearful animal, isn't it?"

"Sometimes," replied Mr. Fudge.

"And the French lower orders are a truculent-looking race, are they not?" said the unhappy Pinchbold.

"Sometimes," repeated Mr. Fudge, as the vehicle started.

Mr. Fudge sat silent and absorbed in thought for some time, as if engaged in making up his mind upon the subject which his friend had left him to decide upon. It was not till the omnibus was on the drawbridge of the town that he turned to the conductor, who was standing close beside him, and put the momentous question—

"Do you happen to know of any one who has a good horse for sale?"

Mr. Pinchbold started in his seat opposite as if he had been shot, and looked anxiously at the conductor, apparently hoping that this official would answer the question in the negative. This, however, was not to be the case.

"There is Monsieur Garrot," said the man; "he has always a large selection of horses in his stables. He is the principal dealer in Malaise."

"And where does he live?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Just outside the gates; there," continued the man, "you can see his house if you look as I point."

"We will go there to-morrow," said Mr. Fudge to his friend, as they descended from the omnibus.

And now that the project of the journey was once fairly entertained everything seemed, in the eyes of Mr. Fudge especially, to favour it, and to render it more attractive. Now, too, the two friends began to compare notes on the subject of the place of their residence, and to own frankly that Malaise was fast becoming the death of them. The journey promised them a speedy deliverance from Malaise, and, what was

still more delightful, from Agnes. They found, on their return from the walk which has just been described, this faithful retainer prepared with a perfectly new means of annoyance. Mr. Fudge had purchased a chicken at the market for dinner; had sent it home, and thought no more about it. On the return of the two friends from their afternoon walk, they naturally expected to find the dinner in an active state of preparation. But Agnes had a surprise in store for them.

Mr. Fudge had just thrown himself, exhausted, on one chair, and Mr. Pinchbold on another, in a condition of before-dinner abjection, when Agnes appeared at the door of the apartment holding the bird, which Mr. Fudge had purchased, in an uncooked state, in her hand. With the head back, and a smile upon her face, the tormentor addressed Mr. Fudge in the third person:—

"Did the gentleman buy this for a chicken?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Fudge, hastily; "how is it that it is not cooked?"

"If the gentleman bought this for a chicken," replied the tormentor, poking the deceased bird in the chest with her thumb, and holding it close to her nose, "he has been deceived."

"Why, what is it?" inquired Mr. Pinchbold, somewhat alarmed.

"If I had roasted this," continued Agnes, without noticing Mr. Pinchbold's question, "it would have been as hard as a board."

"In the name of goodness, what *is* the animal then?" asked Mr. Pinchbold again.

"It is a hen, gentlemen—an old hen, the mother of a family."

"What is to be done with it, then?" asked Mr. Fudge.

"If I had put it on in the morning to boil," said Agnes, musingly, and as if talking to herself, "and it had stewed all day, it might have been eatable."

"Then why didn't you do so?" urged Mr. Fudge, irritably.

"The gentleman sent the hen home with orders that it was to be roasted," remarked the femme de ménage, with fraudulent meekness; "that being so, it was not for me to alter the mode of cooking without orders."

"You have no reason to think," inquired Mr. Pinchbold, hesitatingly, "that the bird in your hand has died a natural death?"

"It might have died of age," answered the abhorrent.

"Nothing shall induce me to partake of that fearful fowl," said Mr. Pinchbold, as Agnes left the room, with directions to boil the "mother of a family" till she became eatable, and to serve her for the morrow's dinner; while the unhappy friends sat down to that refuge of the disappointed—a dish of chops.

"To escape from that woman," remarked Mr. Fudge, as they commenced their meal, "will be a consummation of bliss which alone makes the journey a thing to look forward to with all the eagerness in the world."

"To get away from Malaise," said Mr. Pinchbold,

in his turn, spreading his napkin on his knees, "will be a height of rapture, the idea of which almost reconciles me to the hideous dangers we are going to encounter."

And so these two gentlemen owned the truth at last to each other, and over their frugal meal discussed the abominations of Malaise.

CHAPTER II.

SHOWING HOW OUR TWO FRIENDS MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MONSIEUR GARROT, AND HOW THEY BEHAVED WITH INFINITE CAUTION AND DISCREETNESS.

THE next morning found our two friends, as soon as breakfast was swallowed, hastening in the direction of Monsieur Garrot's premises, as they had been pointed out the day before by the omnibus guard. Of course the morning had not advanced so far without many expressions of misgiving on the part of Mr. Pinchbold, called forth by the thought of the hazardous enterprise they were engaging in.

"I have passed a sleepless night, Fudge," said the unhappy gentleman. "My mind has been a prey to all sorts of horrors—runaway horses, storms, blue-bloused ruffians, copper saucepans, and I know not how many other dreadful things have been floating before my imagination."

Mr. Fudge was relentless. "You have started the idea, Pinch," he said; "your genius has given birth to a mighty project, and now it is too late to abandon it."

"Oh, I don't want to abandon it exactly," interrupted Mr. P.

"For my part," continued Mr. Fudge, "nothing would induce me to give it up. If you wont share

the thing, I'll go—by Jove, sir, I'll go by myself. I never was so taken by anything in my life. It seems a sort of realization of all I used to long for as a boy. Why, I recollect when travelling as a child almost, with my father, in Italy, I used always to envy the position of the Vetturino, who had all the power, and, as I thought, all the fun of the journey in his own hands. Now, we shall be at no one's mercy: we choose our route, our hour of starting; we may do anything we like with carriage or horse; we drive ourselves."

"Nothing shall induce me to touch a rein," Mr. Pinchbold broke in.

"But I am a driver, par excellence," the other went on, "from the time when, as a child, I used to harness my playfellows, or in their default a team of chairs, I have always liked driving; and, at different times, I have had some considerable experience in that line."

"I rejoice to hear it," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, faintly.

"I will see to that part of the business," Mr. F. went on. "All the care and the responsibility of horse, harness, and vehicle, shall rest on my shoulders."

"It shall," said Mr. Pinchbold, fervently; "indeed it shall."

"I don't profess, mind," said Mr. Fudge, who was truth itself, "I don't profess to be what is called a 'horsey' man, or to have had as much experience in horses as I could wish for the success of our undertaking; but I think I have a tolerable general knowledge of the points of a horse, and I have, at different times, when in the country, driven over, I dare say, a

good many miles of ground. However, of course I shall be very careful as to the animal we select. We will buy no horse that we have not tried, and none that has not been first examined by a veterinary surgeon. But there is no time to talk any more about it," said Mr. Fudge, interrupting himself, "for here we are at Monsieur Garrot's door; and there, I suppose, is Monsieur Garrot himself, standing in the middle of the yard."

Picking their steps among heaps of manure and pools of wet, our two friends approached the person who seemed the presiding genius of the place; and Mr. Fudge, undertaking the office of spokesman, and mentioning that he and his friend were in search of a good horse, asked if Monsieur Garrot could undertake to supply their need.

Monsieur Garrot was one of that order of philosophers who hold that if speech is silver, silence is gold. His appearance suggested a combination of the banker, the Scotch minister, and the groom, very curious and interesting to study. He had a straw in his mouth, of course, which was of incalculable service, as it rendered it impossible for him to speak till time enough had elapsed for this impediment to his utterance to be removed. Monsieur Garrot was superintending the removal of a manure-heap when Mr. Fudge addressed him. Having heard what that gentleman had to say, and having gazed at him steadily for some minutes in silence, he now motioned to the man who was engaged in the savoury occupation just mentioned to follow him, and led the way towards a long range of buildings, which formed one side of the yard in which they were standing. There

was a row of doors that gave access to these out-buildings, and one of these Monsieur Garrot now opened, making way, though still in silence, for Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold to enter.

The scene disclosed to view was one with which all persons who have ever ventured on a horse transaction are acquainted. There are few things more bewildering to the judgment, few that inform less, and perplex more, than that row of whisking tails which first meets the eye of him who enters a horse-dealer's stable. As Mr. Fudge stood, with the taciturn dealer by his side, gazing at the back view of a dozen horses, he felt, it must be owned, extremely helpless, and at a loss as to what was to be his next move. It was no use, however, to stand where he was, and the object which our friends had in view would be still less served by his going away: so Mr. Fudge proceeded next to walk down the stable, and pass the row of uninforming tails in review before him. As he did this, accompanied closely by Monsieur Garrot—Mr. Pinchbold was attended by the groom—some of the horses would turn their heads round and stare at him with every variety of expression in their eyes. In one respect, however, their expressions seemed to Mr. Fudge to agree; they all seemed to say, though for somewhat different reasons, "Young man, beware of me!"

No. 1 would give this caution with a rapid glance, which showed a great amount of the white of the eye—a haggard, angular-looking eye: "I am a wild, unmanageable, ill-broken brute, with a temper spoilt by ill-treatment—beware of me, young man, beware of me."

No. 2 would administer the same caution, but from a different motive, with a small and nearly-closed eye, ever in movement, and an ear to match. He said, as plainly as these organs could speak: "I am a nervous wretch; I shy at everything the least suspicious, and sometimes bolt, though not from vice, but fear."

No. 3 would bite at her stall, and dropping her ears flat on her neck, with a suspicious little stamp of the hind leg, said very plainly: "I am, young sir, a confirmed kicker; beware of me, at any cost beware of me."

Whilst No. 4, looking round with a protracted and mild scrutiny, spoke in good set terms to this effect: "My temper is calm, and I am not vicious; but know, thou noble youth, that I have tumbled, and shall tumble on, to the end of my life; so, whatever you do, beware of me, and turn your attention elsewhere."

And thus, as they proceed along the whole row of horses, does every one seem to Mr. Fudge to look more dangerous or more incompetent than the last. He feels, however, that it will not do to give way to these misgivings; so at last he stops before an animal which looks a little more promising than the rest—a white horse, of a sober aspect—and inquires the price. "The price is seven hundred francs," Monsieur Garrot remarks, and upon Mr. Fudge requesting that he may be allowed to see the quadruped outside, its cloth is removed, a bridle is adjusted, a good deal of combing and brushing goes on about the mane and legs, and the animal is brought out, and placed by the groom with all its legs very far apart, so as to

present the most imposing aspect of which it is capable.

But after all, as Mr. Fudge feels, and as Mr. Pinchbold feels still more,—after all, what an inscrutable mystery is enclosed within the white skin of this horse of Monsieur Garrot's, and, if it comes to that, of every other horse that is offered for sale. There the beast stands conspicuous before you, and it is true that if it were disfigured by a pair of broken knees, a swollen joint, or a wall-eye, you would find it out. But what is this? How many secret and veiled maladies and imperfections may be hid under that seemingly tolerable exterior? To take the eye alone—what cataracts, what ophthalmias, what periodical fluxions, may rest there, ready to develop on purchase; or in the legs, what patched-up crippledom that no scrutiny but a professional one—and that not always—could find out? Consider, too, the lungs, and all the loose screws that may lurk concealed in connexion with the organs of respiration. Consider the occult spavins, the stifled coughs, and all the other temporarily repressed diseases which may exist in that animal which you are contemplating, not to speak of the unknown vices, the monstrous crimes of temper, that may be hidden under a fair exterior, and may appear only when you are in the saddle or on the coach-box, the proprietor of this mass of disease, deception, and danger, your gold having passed irrevocably into the dealer's hands. Nor is any trial—short of a month's use—of much service in enabling you to form your judgment. As long as the horse is in the hands of the dealer and his servants, you will hardly be able

to find out anything about him. This truth let the horse-buyer "within his mind rehearse," that those people who are accustomed to a horse can do *anything they like* with him. There is absolutely no limit to their power over the animals under their care. Their control is so complete, that the horse is almost made an accomplice of their tricks and deception.

All these things passed through the mind of Mr. Fudge as he gazed upon the animal before him, as he watched it being trotted up and down by the groom, as he approached it, and looked carefully all over it when this exercise was over. Whilst he was engaged in this occupation, Mr. Pinchbold came creeping up behind him and whispered in his ear,

"I don't like that horse, Fudge," he said; "I feel convinced he is a biter."

"What nonsense, Pinchbold; how can you possibly know?"

"I have been secretly examining his stall," replied Mr. Pinchbold, "and the wood-work of it is gnawed in a manner horrible to behold."

"He looks quiet enough to me," remarked Mr. Fudge, as the horse was again trotted up and down; and then, turning to Monsieur Garrot, he inquired what kind of work the animal had been accustomed to.

"To every kind of work," M. Garrot answered, after slowly taking the straw out of his mouth.

"Before going any further," said Mr. Fudge, who was rather posed by this comprehensive answer, "I should like to see one or two more of your horses."

"Certainly," said M. Garrot; "bring out the black, Gustave."

The white horse was taken in, and after a long interval Gustave reappeared conducting an animal so remarkable in its appearance as to be deserving of a special description. It was about seventeen and a half hands high, coal-black, sloping from the top of the head to the crest, and from the crest to the tail in a sliding scale like a giraffe; it stood with its head in the air so high that it seemed wonderful how the groom could have put the bridle on without ascending a ladder; it had a fearful, rolling eye, tapering legs with small hoofs. In short, it looked like a Demon-horse in a German romance, like a destroying horse seen in dreams, like the incorporation of strength, ferocity, and terror. Mr. Pinchbold fled into a distant doorway at sight of it, and even Mr. Fudge stood aside as the monster passed.

"It is rather large," he remarked to M. Garrot.

"It is just the horse for a journey," replied that gentleman, to whom Mr. Fudge had mentioned the object he had in view. "He is so strong that no amount of work would fatigue him."

"So I should think," said Mr. Fudge, turning round so that he could not see the gesticulations of Mr. Pinchbold, who was making frantic signs to him in the distance.

"Let him go," cried Monsieur Garrot to the groom, who was being lifted off the ground by the Demon in its efforts to escape.

The groom made a virtue of necessity, and *did* let him go. He was then dragged at full gallop from one end of the yard to the other. Here he made a struggle which somehow or other brought the Demon's head round, and so he was conveyed back again at the

same pace. Having succeeded in guiding the dream-horse to a place where his career was checked by a dead wall, the animal was now brought to a stand-still.

"Great resources," said M. Garrot, quietly.

Mr. Fudge felt inclined for something with fewer resources, so he made known to M. Garrot that he thought the Demon-horse was a foot or two too large, and that he should be obliged if he could show him something a size smaller.

"Bring out the brown mare, Gustave," said M. Garrot.

The Demon-horse, after various plunges and rearings, was somehow or other got into the stable-door, and Mr. Pinchbold emerged from his place of retirement.

"It is hopeless," he said, as he approached the place where Mr. Fudge was standing.

"Why, we have only just begun!" replied Mr. Fudge.

"The mere fact of such an animal as that being presented to us at all is enough to discourage one," remarked Mr. P.; "and here, by all that's dreadful, comes another. What extraordinary hind-legs!"

The remark of Mr. Pinchbold on the posterior extremities of the horse which was now trotted out for inspection, seemed certainly more than justifiable. Surely there never were two hind-legs so far apart as those of "the brown mare." When she turned her back and trotted up the yard, the appearance presented was something so remarkable that Mr. Fudge could not help commenting on it to M. Garrot.

"They are not very far apart," said that gentle-

man. "For the rest, if they were, it would only be a sign of strength."

"It is a sign of some horrible kicking propensity, I feel convinced," said Mr. Pinchbold. "Whatever you do, Fudge, have nothing to do with *that* horse."

"According to you, my dear Pinchbold," replied Mr. Fudge, "we should be in a fair way of having nothing to do with *any* horse."

"Very well," said Mr. Pinchbold, "do as you like; only mind, I've warned you!" and, so saying, the good gentleman retired up the yard, peeping into all sorts of sheds and outhouses and unlikely places, with a firm conviction that M. Garrot had some animal of incalculable value for their purpose concealed about his premises, and kept out of sight till all the worse members of his stock were got rid of.

Mr. Fudge, being left to dispose of the brown mare unassisted, was obliged fairly to own that, in spite of M. Garrot's assurances to the contrary, he was still so far from satisfied about the animal's hind-legs that he would decline to have anything more to say to her. After this a piebald horse with pink eyelids was trotted out, and then a horse with a wall-eye, and then a fidgety horse, who conducted himself as if he was standing upon red-hot iron, and then a coughing horse, and then a horse whose fore-legs gave unmistakeable symptoms of "firing," and then a horse who shied completely across the yard (carrying the groom with him) at sight of Mr. Fudge, which was a highly satisfactory proceeding on the part of an animal who was likely to see a good deal of the object of his alarm. In short, it ended in all the horses in M. Garrot's stable being trotted out for Mr. Fudge's

inspection, with the exception of some three or four, who could not be trotted out because they were in such a state of lameness that they might be said to have no legs to trot with.

Now, all this was very bewildering and unsatisfactory, and Mr. Fudge was beginning to get so utterly confused and hopeless, that he was on the point of requesting to see once again the original white horse which they had first examined, when his attention was caught by the sudden reappearance of Mr. Pinchbold, who, approaching him with an air of mystery, and with a countenance of ashy pallor, requested a moment's private conversation without loss of time.

"What is the matter?" inquired Mr. Fudge, as soon as the two friends had reached the seclusion of a distant dunghill towards which, as a retired spot, Mr. Pinchbold had led the way.

"The matter," said Mr. P., "is this, that I entreat you to have nothing to do with any of this man's horses, because I am perfectly convinced they are all a set of incarnate fiends and monsters."

"But on what do you ground this tremendous accusation?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Never mind," said Mr. Pinchbold, in a voice of alarm, "never mind now. I've seen something. I'll tell you by-and-by; only for heaven's sake come away, and have nothing to do with any of these diabolical animals that we have been looking at. Now let us go and wish him good morning, and be off."

Mr. Fudge did not attach much importance to his friend's caution, knowing on what small grounds of

foundation he was in the habit of raising a gigantic superstructure of panic. He was himself, however, not much enamoured of any one of the horses they had been examining, and was, therefore, not very averse to the idea of a retreat. Before taking his departure he thought it good to return once more to the subject of the white horse which they had seen at first, and which seemed the only one in the least likely to answer his and his friend's purpose.

"I suppose," said Mr. Fudge, approaching M. Garrot once more, "that in the event of our being disposed to think seriously of one of your horses—the white one for instance—it would be possible to try it for ourselves?"

"Yes," said M. Garrot, rather hesitatingly; "yes—one of my men or myself will drive out with you whenever you like."

"It would not be possible, then, for us to have the horse for a day to try by ourselves?" Mr. Fudge inquired.

"No," M. Garrot replied; "that would be out of the question."

"Ha!" said Mr. Pinchbold, aside, "I don't like that."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Fudge, not knowing exactly *what* to say, "we will take a little time to think about it. In affairs of this importance one does not decide all at once."

"As you will," remarked M. Garrot, in the dry tone of one who would have been just as well pleased if they *had* decided all at once. "As you will—" and then he hesitated.

"You were going to say?" Mr. Fudge inquired.

"I was going to say," replied the horsedealer, "with regard to the white horse—"

"Yes," interposed Mr. Pinchbold, eagerly.

"Are you two gentlemen much accustomed to being with horses?" inquired M. Garrot, addressing Mr. Pinchbold, as the last speaker.

"No," replied that gentleman, very hastily, "*I* am not, certainly."

The horsedealer turned inquiringly to Mr. Fudge.

"I have from time to time been in the habit of riding and driving, though not continually," answered Mr. Fudge.

"But in the stable?" inquired M. Garrot; "have you seen much of horses in the stable?"

"No," replied Mr. Fudge, frankly: "but why do you ask?"

"Oh, for no particular reason," answered M. Garrot; "only the white horse is rather difficult to manage at times in the stable."

"At what times?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, in a quavering voice, and stealing a look at the animal in question, as if he expected to see him doing some terrible thing then and there. "At what times?"

"Oh, only when he is being fed. He is apt to be a little ferocious at sight of his oats; but as you would not have to feed him yourselves—"

"On the contrary," Mr. Fudge interrupted, "in the course of a journey of the kind we contemplate, that might sometimes be necessary."

"Ah," remarked M. Garrot, who may have had reasons of his own for disparaging the white horse, in order that Mr. Fudge and his friend might fix upon another of less capacity, "in that case you would

have to be careful, or you might chance to get a nip of his teeth."

"There!" said Mr. Pinchbold, triumphantly, to his companion. "There—didn't I tell you he was a biter."

"There is the brown mare, now," said M. Garrot; "*she* has no vice."

"What, the animal with the hind legs—"

"Well separated," continued the dealer. "*She* is the beast for you."

Mr. Fudge not appearing to be so fully convinced of this fact as M. Garrot could desire, that gentleman proceeded to expatiate at some length upon all the qualities possessed by the animal in question, and especially on the advantages inseparable from a considerable space between the hind legs of a horse which was intended for purposes of draught. Mr. Fudge, however, was not to be brought to commit himself, and the utmost concession that the horsedealer could obtain, was a conditional promise that perhaps he might hear from Mr. Fudge upon the subject again on a future day.

"In the mean time," said Mr. Fudge, "perhaps you can tell me where I can meet with a cabriolet, or some such vehicle adapted to a journey, for my friend here and I are in want of a carriage as well as a horse?"

M. Garrot did as he was requested, and signified that a certain M. Brancard, resident in the Rue de Guise, and the principal coachmaker in Malaise, would be the man for their purpose.

With this, and with many ineffectual efforts on the part of M. Garrot to involve the two friends in a promise to visit his stables again at some definite

period, the interview terminated; and at last, to Mr. Pinchbold's great relief, the two gentlemen found themselves clear of M. Garrot's establishment without having finally committed themselves to anything.

"And now," said Mr. Fudge, as they walked along, "tell me at once what it was that you saw at M. Garrot's which caused you so much disturbance, and made you in such a hurry to leave the place?"

"Well, you must know, then," replied Mr. Pinchbold, "that when I left you watching the straddling movements of that hideous brown mare, I went off to see if I could find some horse of superior qualifications concealed about the premises. I opened all sorts of doors, and poked into all sorts of places where I had no business, till at last I got round to the back of the main range of stabling, and into a sort of place something between a yard and a small scrubby-looking field. As I approached this place, I heard a great hammering and clinking, such as you hear in a blacksmith's shop, and as soon as I had looked about me I saw two or three people at the other end of the yard, busy at some occupation or other, and as I saw that there was a horse among them, and that the noises I heard came from the position they occupied, I went up to them. Well, I found on closer inspection that the group I had seen from a distance consisted of a couple of blacksmiths, and a man who looked like a stable-helper, and that they had a horse there whom they had fastened into a sort of immense cage of wooden bars that looked like a rack or some other instrument of torture. I never saw such a horrible-looking thing as it was altogether: the unfortunate beast was, to begin with, not resting on the ground at

all. It was supported by a broad band of sacking which passed under its stomach, and the two sides of which were hauled up to the top of the wooden cage till the animal was off its legs. Its two fore legs were stretched out forwards and fastened to two upright pillars in front, and one of its hind legs was stretched out behind, and fastened to another upright pillar at the back, while the other was held in the grasp of one of the blacksmiths, the other being occupied in *fitting a shoe on to the foot.* The poor wretch's head, too, I forgot to say, was tied up so tightly to the top of the cage that it could not move it, and could hardly even breathe."

"What are you about with that horse?" I said, as soon as I could find words to express myself in.

"We are shoeing it," one of the men answered.

"And why is it tied up in that inhuman manner?" was my next question.

"Oh, it is *mechant*," said the man, who looked like a groom; "and if it was not secured, would kick us all to pieces."

"Oh, indeed," I said; "and are there other horses like that?"

"Plenty," said the man.

"Well, Fudge," continued Mr. Pinchbold, "I assure you that what I saw and heard left such a horrible impression upon my mind that I could not shake it off; and I determined to come at once and caution you."

"But how do you know that the horse you saw was one of M. Garrot's?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Because I asked," was Mr. Pinchbold's answer, "and they told me it was. Oh," he continued pre-

sently, "it was a horrible sight; and I am convinced that all the horses in that place are shoed in the same way, and that it will be insanity to have anything to do with any of them."

It was useless for Mr. Fudge to argue that the mere fact of one of M. Garrot's horses being shoed at the Travail—as the machine was called—was no proof that all the rest were. Mr. Pinchbold remained firm in his conviction, and triumphantly referred to his having discovered that the white horse was a confirmed biter, in proof of his powers of discernment in all such matters.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLOT THICKENS, AND THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO BIJOU, THE "PEARL OF MALAISE."

THE suggestion of Monsieur Garrot brought the two heroes of this story back to Malaise as fast as they could walk; and on arriving in the Rue de Guise, they made their way at once to the house that had been indicated to them as the residence of Monsieur Brancard, the coachmaker. It was a house with a great open shop, which led through to the forge, and to the atelier at the back, where all the work was done. As Mr. Fudge and the partner of his toils approached the shop-door, they observed that a man was doing something or other to a great lumbering cart which stood out in the street, and in the shafts of which a powerful white mare was standing looking lazily up the street, and now and then nodding a little, as if she had been there a long time, and thought it a good opportunity of taking a wink or two of sleep *en passant*.

"What a handsome mare," remarked Mr. Fudge to his friend.

"She looks quiet, too," observed the other, characteristically.

By this time the two friends had arrived at the

shop-door. The man who was hammering at the cart looked up as they drew near; and Mr. Fudge, concluding at once that he was the proprietor of the establishment, proceeded at once to business, and inquired whether he happened to know of a cabriolet or a carriole for sale at that time.

"Of both," said the man, with tremendous alacrity, and instantly abandoning his occupation.

"Where are they to be seen?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Here, at two steps off," was the answer.

"And when could we see them?"

"Now, this instant," said the eager man, bursting into a cold perspiration of excitement. "Only take the trouble to come with me, and you shall see the best cabriolet, and the choicest carriole, to be found in Malaise, or its neighbourhood."

Mr. Fudge and his friend having signified their readiness to start, the eager man called to a child about two feet high, who was standing near, and telling him to mind the horse, led the way at a rapid pace, which made him perspire more than ever.

"That must be a quiet beast to be left in charge of that infant," remarked Mr. Pinchbold.

"It must, indeed," answered his friend, looking back admiringly at the mare; "how I should like such an animal."

"There," said the eager man, stopping to wipe, not his heated, but his chilled brow, with a handkerchief that he took out of his breeches pocket. They had arrived, after passing through two or three streets, at the shop of a harness-maker, in front of which a light gig was placed, with its shafts resting on the ground.

"There," said the perspiring man, pointing to the gig, "is the vehicle for your purpose."

"But it is not a cabriolet," said Mr. Fudge.

"It looks very slight and insecure," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, in an undertone.

"Not a cabriolet," shouted the eager man. "Look here," he added, pointing to some iron clasps which were placed round the back and sides of the gig; "there is a capote, or hood, which fastens on to these; when that is fixed, find me such another cabriolet if you can."

"But isn't it rather small?" asked Mr. Fudge.

"Small!" screamed the man; "it is enormous. How many is it for?"

"Why, for two, of course," replied Mr. Fudge.

"Two," replied the man; "why it holds me, my wife, my brother-in-law, my children, all at once, with ease."

"And the luggage, where would that go?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

The eager man lifted up a trap-door in the seat of the gig which gave access to a receptacle which would perhaps, at a pinch, have contained a very small carpet-bag, supposing it had been made on purpose to fit it.

"Not room enough," said Mr. Fudge to his friend, "I am afraid. Where could we put the cooking utensils which we ought to take?"

"Besides our personal luggage," urged Mr. P.

"Then there should be a chafing-dish," said Mr. Fudge.

"And the pistols," said Mr. P.; "I insist upon pistols."

"No, it will not do," said Mr. Fudge, addressing

the man, who had been standing during this short dialogue holding the trap-door open with a triumphant aspect; "there is not room enough."

It was in vain that the eager man protested that there was room; in vain that he rushed into the harness-maker's shop and dragged out its owner, that he also might say there was room; in vain that he appealed to the bystanders, who were five or six strong of course, and who all said there was room; in vain that he entreated our two friends to step round to his house and ask his wife if there was not room; his children, his neighbours, they would tell the gentleman whether there was room. It was in vain, in short, that he raved, and roared, and perspired; in vain that he wiped his brow and appealed to heaven. Mr. Fudge and his friend were firm, and would not have anything to say to the gig.

"Let us see the carriole," said Mr. Fudge.

"Ah!" said the eager man, changing his tactics at once, "the carriole, that is the vehicle for you; strong, roomy, easy, the carriole will fit these gentlemen," continued M. Grisois, turning to the public, "as if it were a glove."

The bystanders moaned a soft assent, and the eager man rushed off in search of a certain brother-in-law, without whose consent it appeared that the carriole could not be inspected.

This brother-in-law was a man of few words, and who, when he did speak, rather seemed to have the interests of Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold at heart than his own or his relatives', with whom he would sometimes even expostulate about some trifling matter in which he appeared a little too careful of his own

interest. He was a pale man, and he wore a frock-coat and a cap.

"Do you happen to know," said Mr. Fudge, turning to the excited man, as they walked along towards the stables where the carriole was to be seen, "do you happen to know of any one who has a good horse for sale?"

"Do you hear that?" cried the eager man, not answering the question, but appealing at once to his relative. "Do you hear? This gentleman wants to know if I *happen* to know of any one who has a good horse for sale."

"Well," continued Mr. Fudge, "*do* you happen to know of any one?"

"I happen to know of one," replied the eager man, "who possesses an animal without its equal on the surface of the globe."

"Is it quiet?" asked Mr. Pinchbold.

"Quiet! Ha, ha! An infant in arms might drive it with a rein of darning-cotton."

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Pinchbold, "what a charming animal. Is it sure-footed?"

"Sure-footed! Ha, ha! You may drive it down a precipice without a drag, and it will not stumble. Stay," continued Monsieur Grisois, and, as if to render further questioning unnecessary, he stopped short in the middle of the street, and addressing himself to Mr. Pinchbold only, burst into the following eloquent description of the animal whose qualities he was vaunting: "She is quiet—she is strong—she is beautiful—she is afraid of nothing—railway-trains, engines, omnibuses, wheelbarrows, steam-boats—" (a source of panic, by the bye, by which horses are

not likely to be much incommoded). "She is afraid of nothing—nothing in the world. She is sound, with lungs of such a quality that you might drive her up Mont Blanc at full gallop. She is sweet-tempered, she is lovely to behold; in short, she is known to all the town by but one title,

'THE PEARL OF MALAISE!!'"

"And to whom does she belong?" inquired Mr. Pinchbold, breathlessly.

"To ME," replied Monsieur Grisois, drawing himself up and proudly slapping his breast.

"Is it the horse we saw just now in the Rue de Guise, standing in a cart?"

"The very same," was the answer.

"Now, Fudge, hear me," said Mr. Pinchbold, turning hastily to his friend. "From the first moment I saw that animal I had a presentiment that it was the horse we wanted. For heaven's sake don't let us lose such a chance."

"We must not be in a hurry," said Mr. Fudge, cautiously. "And pray, Monsieur Grisois," he continued, presently turning to the owner of "la Perle de Malaise," "may I ask, since this horse that you speak of is so faultless a beast, why you are disposed to part with it."

"Why am I disposed to part with her?" repeated Monsieur Grisois, as if to gain a little time. "I part with her—I part with her—because——"

"Because," interposed the brother-in-law, "she is too good for him."

"Yes," continued the excited Grisois, "that is it. She is too good. I shall ruin her. You saw her but now in a cart. I am obliged to take her long distances

with heavy loads. I shall destroy her; yes, she is too good for me. It is because I know her qualities—, because I love her, that I will sell her."

"Hum," said Mr. Fudge.

"A fine fellow that," said Mr. Pinchbold, speaking in the English tongue. "I like him for that."

"And what may be the price of this 'Bijou,' as you call her?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Her price," said Monsieur Grisois, with an effort, and taking off his cap to wipe his brow; "her price is nine hundred and fifty francs."

"Whew—ew," ejaculated Mr. Fudge; "that is a good deal of money."

"Thirty-eight pounds," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, after an interval devoted to mental arithmetic.

"You have asked these gentlemen too much," interposed the brother-in-law; "nine hundred francs would be different. That is the price you should ask."

"Very well," said Grisois, "then I make that concession. Nine hundred francs be it, but not a farthing under."

"Thirty-six pounds," said Mr. Pinchbold. "It is a good deal; but still no money is too much for a quiet horse."

"It is ridiculous," said Mr. Fudge; "not to be thought of. We should be ruined at that rate."

"You shall see her, gentlemen," interposed Monsieur Grisois; "my brother will take you to the stable where the carriole stands, and I will go back and fetch the mare and bring her to you there."

"Well, there is no harm in seeing her," said Mr. Fudge, as Grisois, perspiring more than ever, darted off in execution of his intention.

Arrived at the stable, the friends, attended by the brother-in-law, had plenty of time to examine the carriole, while Monsieur Grisois himself was gone in search of Bijou. It was a great heavy vehicle on two wheels, something like an ordinary tradesman's cart, more elegant in shape, and with a kind of apron in front. It is enough to say that it was very large, and so cheap that Mr. Fudge seemed inclined to treat for it, had not Mr. Pinchbold suggested a horrid doubt whether there would not be a "wobbling" movement in a vehicle on two wheels, which would be intolerable during a long journey; and this remark gave rise to a discussion at some length, which was only interrupted by the sound of hoofs approaching the stable, a sound which announced at once the arrival of Bijou.

The "Pearl of Malaise" was certainly a well-favoured beast, and both Mr. Fudge and Mr. Pinchbold felt as they looked at her a degree of admiration which it was not easy to conceal. She was a white mare, standing about fifteen and a half hands, and, with the exception of being a little heavy, was almost perfectly proportioned. High and strongly built in the breast, with a good oblique shoulder, the cavity of the chest large and deep, well planted on her legs, with knees guiltless of a scar, short in the loins, but yet somewhat long in the body from the extent backwards of the chest, and the capacious size of the haunches, the mare seemed, except from having a rather heavy neck and head—not serious faults in a draught-horse—to be everything that a purchaser could desire. As for her temper, there could be no doubt about that; the only defect of her disposition

was one which not uncommonly accompanies an easy temper—she was rather lazy. You could see it in her quiet eye and her undistended nostril; she was a little phlegmatic and sluggish. But then, what qualities went with this tendency—nay, were inseparable parts of it—what firm nerves, what an undisturbed serenity! An animal, this, that you might leave standing at a door unguarded, a beast on whose neck you might hang the reins as you walked up hill by her side, or with whom you might venture upon that most hazardous of all experiments—the administering of a feed, *en route*, without taking her out of the shafts. In short, she was just the kind of beast for long days of leisurely travelling and loitering by the way, not one to wear herself out, or with whom one could press forward post-haste, but still an animal of great resources, and with regard to whom one would have no fears whatever of the possibility of a break-down.

"What an angelic countenance!" said Mr. Pinch-bold, as the "Pearl" turned her head round and surveyed the two friends with a good-natured, lazy stare.

Mr. Fudge was, in his own inmost heart, not a whit behind his companion in his admiration of M. Grisois' mare, but he did not allow himself to give expression to what he felt. He looked at her critically, and examined her with that disparaging air with which those who are about to make a purchase should always regard the object of their desire. As for M. Grisois himself, he was, if possible, louder and more ecstatic in his admiration of his horse now in her presence than he had been before in her absence.

All the phrases which he had poured forth in such volleys at the first mention of Bijou were again recapitulated, and many more new ones added for the occasion.

"There's an animal," said M. Grisois, at the conclusion of his tirade; "there is calmness! You may drive her through the fire, and let off pistols by the side of her head, and she will not mind. You may mount her," he continued, turning suddenly to Mr. Pinchbold, who shook his head—"mount her! why you may dance upon her back and she will remain quiet. You will call her and she will come to you and follow you about like a dog, as she does my wife. See, she comes when she is called—Bijou, Bijou (the animal walked away). There," said M. Grisois, lugging her back by the halter, "there's docility for you! Find me such another mare as that in Malaise if you can."

If Mr. Pinchbold had been left to his own devices, there is little doubt that he would have walked out of M. Grisois' stable with Bijou at his heels, but he was possessed of a cautious Mentor in his friend Mr. Fudge. It was one part of that gentleman's character never to decide on any point till he had heard *all* that was to be said about it, and never to select any object, animate or inanimate, till he had seen as large a collection as possible *of* such objects, and had endeavoured, by comparing one with another, to arrive at a safe conclusion as to the comparative merits of all the candidates for his favour.

"We must see more horses before we decide," he said, "nor can we think of committing ourselves to Bijou, or any other member of her race, without first

taking the opinion of a veterinary surgeon as to her soundness."

Mr. Pinchbold had nothing to urge against these suggestions, except his own longing to become possessed of the mare, and so with the somewhat vague promise that they "would think about it," the two friends took their leave of M. Grisois and his brother-in-law, for the present.

Nothing could exceed the energy with which Mr. Fudge went to work to attain his object. He went up to unoffending people who were sitting in their covered carts waiting at house-doors to ask whether perchance the horse in their shafts was for sale. He even addressed the Commissaire de Police, a wonderful-looking man, with a Vandyke beard and huge spectacles, on the subject; and on another occasion went the length of stopping the principal medical man in Malaise to ask him if he knew of a horse for sale.

The result of these wide-spread inquiries is that it soon becomes known all over Malaise and its environs that the two English gentlemen are in want of a horse and carriage, and very soon it happens that just as they had stopped strangers in the street to ask if they knew of a horse or carriole for sale, so strangers now stop *them* in the street, to say that in a stable hard by there is a marvellous horse or an unprecedented vehicle if they will but step aside and look at it. Then they *do* step aside and look at it, and a more remarkable collection of quadrupeds, or a more eccentric combination of carriages, than these researches disclose to them, it would be difficult to conceive. Horses with one leg—or perhaps two or three

—in the grave; horses who should be spending the decline of life in an elegant leisure of fields and pastures; horses so old that their teeth seem to be about two inches long; horses which shake all over as they are propped up from behind for inspection; horses with fore-legs arched like a bent bow, and swollen about the fetlocks with immoderate labour.

Throughout all their researches, too, the friends were haunted not only mentally but corporeally by the "Pearl of Malaise." They were always meeting her about the streets, where her owner seemed to keep her lying in wait for their approach, or meeting her if they walked out of the town, harnessed to the carriole, and looking the embodiment of health and power as she trotted along. On one occasion, too, when Mr. Fudge and his friend were crossing the Place d'Armes, they saw Bijou standing in a conspicuous place held by the head by M. Grisois, while a knowing-looking man in boots was examining her all over, just as purchasers do before buying a horse. It was curious, too, how everybody to whom they spoke of the mare was enthusiastic in praising her, and this in one instance especially was so remarkable, as almost to appear to the wary Mr. Fudge a reason for increased caution and apprehensiveness.

Among the number of those persons to whom our two friends had been sent with wonderful accounts of what they might expect to find in reward for their trouble, was a certain Monsieur Porquet, who was a sort of combination of a horsedealer and an innkeeper, a kind of amalgamation which is not uncommon in the French dominions. He was a wonderful old scamp this M. Porquet, belonging, too, to that

particular tribe that affects a sort of stupidity and carelessness, but keeps a sharp look-out after the main chance all the time. He was the kind of man who confuses you in making a bargain by first saying one thing and then another, by pretending to forget what you have said, or what he has said himself, assuming all the time a kind of joking, extravagant manner, which leads you to think you can do anything you like with him, that he does not care about his property or what you do with it.

You want to see his horses, do you? Oh by all means, there they are, he will show you the way; you will like to try one and drive him yourself, that is natural; well, whenever you like. See, there is that brown mare, she would do; would you like her, or what do you think of that gray? He is a little treasure, take him. The price? Oh, we can talk of that another time; take him out and try him. Or, look at this bay, what's the reason he should not do? No, not that chestnut, he's too spirited, a dangerous animal, belonged to an English gentleman: you know him, monsieur, he was a Meester Smith of London; well, Meester Smith could not drive him, and sold him as unmanageable; no, you must not have him.

All this time M. Porquet is threading his way along the dark stable, and hushing and quieting each horse as he passes, apparently in great bodily fear of the whole collection. Presently, without looking at either Mr. Fudge or Mr. Pinchbold, he says:—

"You, gentlemen, have been looking at Grisois' white mare, have you not? Why don't you take her? a better beast does not exist in Malaise. She was

mine once, and I sold her to Grisois, so I know all about her?"

"Do you hear that," Mr. Pinchbold said, on hearing this cordial recommendation. "Here is the opinion of a rival even favourable."

"Ye-e-s," said Mr. Fudge, reflectively.

"Why, what can you want now, Fudge?" inquired Mr. Pinchbold, speaking under his breath. "What interest *can* he have in our buying Bijou?"

"That is exactly what I am trying to find out," replied Mr. Fudge, who then proceeded to put many pertinent and searching questions to this horse-dealing innkeeper, or inn-keeping horsedealer, whichever he was to be considered, all of which, however, the other managed to evade. Indeed M. Porquet had every means at his command for slipping out of any difficulty in which he might find himself, for not only could he completely avoid the giving a direct answer to any question that might be put to him by flying off instantly to something else, but he was surrounded by a quantity of mysterious friends and dependents who all seemed to take their cue from him, and who praised his horses or Bijou indifferently, and who were quite as ready to promise everything and do nothing as the patron himself.

"There is a horse, if you like," said M. Porquet, hobbling goutily up to the gray horse, and smacking him on the hind-quarter. "There is a horse for you!"

"Ah," sighed a dependent, "what a horse!"

"Horse and a half that," remarked a stableman, in an equivalent French idiom.

"I'll tell you about that horse," cried a friend in a blouse, who elbowed his way to a front place and

addressed M. Porquet, and *not* our two friends in the slightest degree. "It is a horse," said the man in the blouse, "to make a friend of; hang the reins on a hook and go to sleep in a carriage, and he drives himself, no reins wanted, no whip—a horse that is cheap at any price."

"What is his price?" screamed a new friend, bouncing into the yard like an expiring firework, and in his turn pushing his way among the friends and dependents till he got to a front place. "What is the price of your horse, Monsieur Porquet? Good morning, Monsieur Porquet; good morning, gentlemen all. What is the price of that inestimable horse, Monsieur Porquet?"

"Bah!" replied M. Porquet; "his price is a thousand francs."

"No," cried the other, dashing about the yard still like an expiring firework, poking into outhouses, and sheds, and stables, and out of them again, as if looking for something. "No—no. Ah, there is the brown mare, and there the bay horse, all excellent—all your horses are excellent. I know them all, all excellent: but a thousand francs, for example, is too much. No, no, not a thousand—not a thousand."

"Well, then, we will say nine hundred," turning round, and winking at Mr. Fudge, to that gentleman's intense mystification.

"Ah, for example, nine hundred is different," cried the excitable man—"that is altogether different; nine hundred is not dear, that, my dear M. Porquet, is not dear; nine hundred is different." And with that the excitable man tore out of the yard as violently as he had rushed into it, and was seen no more.

"What a mysterious set of people these are," said Mr. Pinchbold.

Indeed they were. The short specimen here given was only one of eight or ten similar scenes through which our friends passed in the course of that number of visits to M. Porquet's stables. Appointment after appointment was made for trying his horses, but, for some reason or other, they were never kept. The horse to be tried was out, or had been out, and was tired. A journey had had to be performed in haste, and the only available horse for the purpose was the one which Mr. Fudge wanted to try. Nay, to such an extremity were things driven at last, that one day, when the two friends arrived, bent on trying the celebrated gray, M. Porquet met them at the stable-door with the assurance that it was impossible on that occasion, as the horse had gone lame.

This last excuse was so completely successful that both Mr. Fudge and his friend resolved, from that moment, to have nothing more to do with M. Porquet or his horses either—a determination, however, which brought no cessation of their toils. Urge it as he would, it was impossible for Mr. Pinchbold to persuade his friend to conclude at once the purchase of Bijou, and so bring the affair to an end. Mr. Fudge had taken it into his head that M. Porquet had some share in the sale of Grisois' mare; and this caused him to feel a great mistrust and doubt about her. At all events, he was determined to see everything in the shape of a horse that Malaise or its neighbourhood could produce before coming to a decision. Many were the excursions undertaken by the two friends, at all sorts of seasons, and in all

sorts of weather, in pursuit of horses or carriages, which they were told they would infallibly find at their journey's end. There never was such a life as they led. Their meals were all consumed at irregular times; dinners were put off, and dinners were hurried on, and many were the opportunities offered to the malignant Agnes of sending up their food in every varied condition of spoliation—opportunities which, let us do her the justice to say, she was never slow to avail herself of. There was, indeed, one occasion when our two Englishmen were so pressed for time, in their impatience to bring their researches to a conclusion, that they were compelled—Agnes having gone home, as was her custom, in the afternoon, to her own dinner—to prepare their meal themselves. The result of this desperate attempt, the practical part of which devolved upon Mr. Fudge, was the production of certain blackened fragments of calcined matter, which he jocularly described as a dish of cutlets, and which proving wholly uneatable, were carried, in the dead of night, into the Place d'Armes, and there cast loose upon society; this being the plan hit upon by the united genius of Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold, to avoid the discovery by their domestic of the culinary failure of which they had been guilty.

This memorable day of the cutlets was that on which, in the midst of a drenching rain, the two friends set off in a sort of compromise between a diligence and an omnibus to a neighbouring town, where they had been told there was a perfect glut of carriages of the kind they wanted. It was, moreover, the memorable day of their first finding them-

selves under the conduct of a *female* driver, with whom (and a friend of hers, who would squeeze herself in) they shared the *coupé*. This was the day, too, when on arriving in the dusk of the evening at the place that had been indicated to them, they were shown over a yard where all kinds of gaunt skeletons, in the shape of unfinished carriages, were scattered about, but where there was no single one that was finished or available. This, again, was the day when Mr. Pinchbold's hat was blown off into a muddy place, and his umbrella turned inside out by the wind. It was the day when Mr. Fudge, the cutlets having failed, went up to the door of the principal auberge, and inquiring if they could have anything to eat, was told that there was nothing, but that it would be market-day to-morrow. Finally, it was the day when both gentlemen determined on beating a speedy retreat back to Malaise, at which place they arrived again under the auspices of the lady-driver, at about ten o'clock in the evening, wet and exhausted, and were received by Agnes with the intelligence that the fire which they had made in the kitchen had caused a fissure in the stove from its fierceness, and that the burnt grease which they had spilt on the carpet of the *salle à manger* had rendered that piece of upholstery useless thenceforth and for ever.

Nor was the excursion to the Beau Marais Farm, where they heard that they would find their affair—the invariable phrase—much more full of result than their other researches. At this place, which was situated in the middle of a dreary waste, about five miles from Malaise, they found about half-a-dozen

colts, all of the cart-horse tribe, and so heavy that when they were forced into a trot, the very earth shook under their weight. Here, too, they found that not uncommon character, a thin and astute French farmer, who met every objection to his property with flat denial, who understood nothing that it was to his purpose not to understand, and seized everything which suited his purpose with astounding quickness. Here also were the inevitable friends who went into ecstasies about every animal which was trotted out, who took Mr. Fudge aside to tell him that he would never have such a chance again; and then took Mr. Pinchbold aside, greatly to his alarm, to communicate the same thing to him; and at this place at last, or, at any rate, in walking home from it, they came to the conclusion that it was Bijou or nothing, and that they would go the length the next day of trying the Pearl of Malaise in Monsieur Grisois' carriole.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE COURSE OF THIS CHAPTER ALL DIFFICULTIES ARE OVERCOME BY THE ENERGY AND RESOLUTION OF MR. FUDGE, AND THE "CRUISE UPON WHEELS" BEGINS.

THE trial of Bijou was in all respects satisfactory, saving and excepting that the laziness which her appearance had suggested came out occasionally in the course of the trial trip. It was a short one. The owner of the animal, who would not let her go without him, even for a short drive, took the reins, Mr. Fudge sat beside him, watching eagerly every movement, and every absence of movement on the part of his contemplated purchase, while Mr. Pinchbold sat upon a back seat, and stared between the two heads in front of him at Bijou's white ears. The conversation consisted chiefly of a monologue of rapture uttered by M. Grisois, interrupted by occasional shouts to the mare when she gave indications of a tendency to relax in her pace.

Throughout the trial trip, the rain poured in torrents, and the wind blew a hurricane, and as, in consequence of the direction which M. Grisois had taken, the rain was driven straight into the interior of the

carriole, our two friends were neither of them unwilling to consent when M. Grisois, after driving about three miles out of Malaise, proposed that they should turn and go back again.

"Three miles is as good as thirty," M. Grisois remarked, "to test the paces and behaviour of an animal." An observation in the truth of which Mr. Pinchbold was very ready to believe, and even Mr. Fudge, though not quite feeling so convinced on the subject as his friend, made no objection to M. Grisois' proposition, being rather cold and wet, and in reality very well pleased with the mare, whose behaviour, with the exception of that sluggishness which has been already noticed, was quite unexceptionable.

On the return of the party to Malaise, a short conference took place apart between Mr. Pinchbold and his friend, after which Mr. Fudge made an appointment with Grisois for that same afternoon, when he would come to the stable in company with a veterinary surgeon, for the purpose of examining Bijou thoroughly all over, before making an offer.

Of course the trial trip being over, the weather cleared up, and when Mr. Fudge started for the abode of the veterinary surgeon it was quite a fine and sunny afternoon. Mr. Pinchbold remained at home, having to write what he called—it being part of the fiction of his onerous legal responsibilities—"letters on business," which, by the bye, were generally addressed to members of his own family, or bore on their outsides the name of his laundress in the Temple.

M. Morve—which was the name of the medical authority whom Mr. Fudge was about to consult—

lived exactly opposite to the abode of our two friends, but his dwelling was at the extremity of a long courtyard, and was indeed a sort of pavilion situated at the back of the houses in the main street. He was, as both Mr. Fudge and his friend had often remarked in seeing him go in and out, a tremendous old scamp to look at, and bore no resemblance whatever to the members of his profession in England, who present commonly an appearance something between a groom and a chemist. M. Morve looked like neither, but wore rather a military appearance, having a cap with a turned-up brim, and a white moustache and chin-tuft of great length. M. Morve wore also a pair of enormous round spectacles, which if they were added with the intention of imparting a look of responsibility and respectability to his appearance, might be considered a failure. In short, he looked like an elderly gentleman who had deserted from the army in early life, had then set up in business as a smuggler of bad cigars and a vendor of stolen puppies. He was always accompanied by a large white dog of the breed known in France by the name of "Lou-lous."

As Mr. Fudge walked up the long courtyard or garden that led to this medical gentleman's abode, he observed that M. Morve was seated at his door in an arm-chair, and was engaged in the interesting occupation of searching for any specimens of an entomological kind that might lurk concealed in the fur of his favourite dog. In short, he was fleaing the animal very carefully, while his daughter, a young lady of coquettish appearance, stood in the doorway reading the newspaper to her father. The dog was the first to perceive Mr. Fudge's approach, and he dropped

at once into position before his master, who was just at the moment finishing a flea upon his nail.

M. Morve was too important a medical authority to hear a word Mr. Fudge had to say till both gentlemen were closeted in his professional study at the back of the pavilion. It was a room presenting a curious combination of a betting-office and a surgery —being adorned with portraits of horses, and shelves full of drugs alternately. The smell, too, was an exactly balanced composition of the doggy and the physicky which was very curious and impressive.

Having learnt—for an economist like Mr. Fudge always makes his bargains beforehand—that M. Morve's fee was a modest three francs only, and having further ascertained that his time was at that moment at Mr. Fudge's service, that gentleman proposed an immediate start for the stable, and M. Morve having exchanged his military cap for a very curly-brimmed hat, and having further prepared himself for an appearance in the streets by arming himself with a gold-headed cane, the pair set off at once; a short, whispered dialogue, probably having reference to the three francs, having taken place first between the veterinary gentleman and his better-half. Mr. Fudge thought, from what he overheard, that the conversation consisted of an expostulatory address on the part of the lady, who was outraged that the excellent Morve had not made a better bargain. As Mr. Fudge and his companion passed out, the former gentleman remarked that Mr. Pinchbold was, in the intervals of a "letter on business," looking out of window.

M. Morve, like a great many people who have

either very little that is worth showing, or a great deal that they don't want to show, was very silent. He had never heard of Bijou, which Mr. Fudge thought an odd thing in so small a place as Malaise, had never seen her, never heard of M. Grisois. He would say nothing about his profession, was not of Mr. Fudge's opinion that there was a great deal of roguery connected with the horse trade—quite the contrary—nor did he think it very difficult to get a good horse; there were plenty to be had if you knew where to look for them, and had a discreet adviser to assist you in your choice.

The discreet adviser whom Mr. Fudge had chosen, and who was the only member of his profession at Malaise, was evidently up to all the business of his craft, and went through a series of performances on arriving at Bijou's stable, which the reader may perhaps wish to hear described in case he should ever desire to assume the appearance of a judge of horse-flesh.

First of all then, you must of course assume, as in the application of all sorts of tests to all sorts of wares, a frowning and disparaging air, and so above all things you will do well to hold your tongue as much as possible, and perhaps you may even with advantage follow M. Garrot's example, and keep a straw in your mouth as a gag.

The first thing to do on arriving in the stable is to stand for a short time in moody silence, taking a back view of the animal before you, and quietly noticing how he stands, whether on all his four legs at once or with one bent and at rest, in which case you will remember the bent leg, and keep a sharp look-out

upon it throughout the succeeding examination. Having stood a sufficient time at the animal's hind-quarters, you will turn gloomily to the owner of the horse and say "Quiet?" interrogatively, after which, if the implied question is answered in the affirmative, you will slap the object of your inspection upon the rump, and will say, if it is an English horse, "Get over," and if it is a French one "Allons," a form of address which meets any known horse-emergency in all parts of the continent. You must do this, however, confidently, or the beast will see through you, and will perhaps either decline to answer your appeal or respond to it with a gentle kick. Both sides of the horse having now been exposed to view as far as they can be seen for the boards of the stall, you will next request that the animal may be turned round and brought out, and you will wait patiently while the inevitable combing and wiping process, which no groom will ever dispense with, is gone through. As soon as the horse has been turned and brought to the stable door, and before it has crossed the threshold, you will call out "stop," and you will then advance with a swift and confident air, and stare straight into the animal's eyes, which you will alternately shade and expose to the light with your hand, to test the contractile power of the pupil. You will also tear open the poor beast's mouth in a savage manner, and peer into its teeth very rigidly, after which, if you understand the teeth-test in the matter of age, you will probably be able to prove that your victim is at least a year older than has been asserted, while if you know nothing about it, you had better confine yourself to wiping the animal's saliva off your fingers with

its mane, with a sardonic grin upon your features, to imply that you have found out a great deal by the process you have just gone through, but that you don't choose to say what.

You will now direct that the quadruped which you are criticising thus severely may be taken into the open air, and a groom or the proprietor of the horse, as the case may be, will remove the animal to a convenient spot, where in the full daylight you will go over the whole surface of its body and limbs, from the tip of its nose to the point of its tail, and from the extremities of its fore legs to the corresponding extremities of its hinder ones, especially taking care to pinch the unfortunate brute's loins to test their flexibility, to feel all down its legs in order to ascertain whether the tendons are well separated from the bones, whether there are any little lumps under the skin, or anything in short at which you can carp or object. You will of course make the hoofs an especial subject of scrutiny, lifting, or causing to be lifted, each one in turn, for your inspection. This over, as you raise your body from examining the last hoof you will heave a sigh, and again wiping your fingers on the animal's body, will utter the monosyllables, *hum* and *ha*, two or three times. You may even permit yourself, if the horse you are looking at is to your taste, and you are in danger of becoming excited, to counterfeit a slight yawn, or you may if you prefer it, hiss a tune through your clenched teeth.

You will continue this exercise while the next process, that of trotting the horse up and down, is gone through, and you will stand with your hands supporting the small of your back, and your legs as far

apart—you will wear very tight trousers that day—as you conveniently can. Any awkwardness in turning on the part of your victim, any twistings out or in of the legs in trotting, any failing of the limb as the weight rests upon it, you will eagerly watch and catch at, not saying anything, but simply altering the measure which you are whistling, or increasing its violence of delivery as any such failing becomes apparent. You will also stop the horse suddenly as he passes you, and then hold your hand to his side, examine his nostrils, and in other ways test his wind, and finally, and after he has been trotted almost out of his life, you will request that he may be brought back to his stable, and that some oats may be administered to him then and there. While he is eating these you will stand with your hands behind you, and with your eyes steadily fixed upon his flank, a position which you will not resign for at least five minutes, at the expiration of which time, and when you have made the unhappy beast cough by grasping its throat to see how it recovers itself, the examination may be considered over.

All these ceremonies, with the exception of anything that might seem the least disparaging, did M. Morve go through, while Mr. Fudge and Bijou's owner looked on in silence. At the conclusion of the last test M. Morve turned to M. Grisois, and in a calm tone, and as if he was conveying a piece of information of which the other had no idea, uttered these remarkable words:—"Not a bad mare." After which he intimated to Mr. Fudge that the examination was over, and that whenever he thought proper to leave, he (Morve) was ready to go.

As soon as Mr. Fudge and his learned companion were clear of the stable and its environs, the conversation naturally turned on what they had just been doing, and Mr. Fudge lost no time in inquiring how far the recent examination had been satisfactory to M. Morve's professional eye.

It had happened, of course, that when Mr. Fudge called in the assistance of his veterinary acquaintance, he informed him, in general terms, of the nature of the service which would be required of Bijou, in the event of his ultimately purchasing her, and had mentioned that he was travelling without a servant, that it might often happen that he would be obliged to harness or unharness his horse himself, to give it food, and so on, with his own hands, and that, therefore, in addition to the great requisite of strength, for the carrying out of the journey, a very quiet nature was indispensably necessary as a leading characteristic of the animal which he was in search of. Now directly that M. Morve was appealed to for his opinion on Bijou's qualities, he took the line of ignoring all that Mr. Fudge had told him, and enunciated his views on the characteristics of the mare, just as if he was not aware that every quality he attributed to her was just what Mr. Fudge would wish the animal to possess.

"For a fast animal to trot rapidly about a town," said M. Morve, "I would not recommend this mare. But if a gentleman wanted a horse for a journey now, a horse to do a certain amount, say thirty miles a day, quietly and at a sober pace; if the gentleman were travelling without a servant and wanted a horse that at a pinch he might harness and unharness him-

self, or even administer a feed of corn to under an emergency; if he wanted an animal whose qualities were rather enduring than brilliant, if, above all, he wanted a beast possessed of an excellent temper—"

"But all these things," Mr. Fudge interrupted, "I have just told you are what I am in search of."

"Then," said M. Morve, laying his hand gently on Mr. Fudge's arm, "take my advice and secure her without loss of time. You will not be giving too much if you pay eight hundred, or eight hundred and fifty francs for her, and will easily sell her in Paris or any other large town for a thousand."

Well, surely this was an encouraging view of affairs, and surely such an opinion as this was cheaply purchased at the three francs which Mr. Fudge paid for it. So, at all events, Mr. Pinchbold thought when he heard the result of the recent examination of Bijou. Mr. Fudge, however, was not quite so well satisfied.

"Now, hear the rest," he said, after having told Mr. Pinchbold all that has been related above—a narration which Mr. P. had laid aside the "letters on business" with amazing alacrity to listen to. "Now, hear the rest; as soon as I had parted from this M. Morve, I went round to look at a carriole which I had heard was to be seen in the Rue Poissonnière, and which I think, by the bye, if we can get it at a reasonable price, will do—well, as I was returning, I had to pass the end of the street in which Bijou's stable is situated, and there I saw our veterinary friend walking directly towards the abode of M. Grisois. He saw me, though he pretended not, so it was no use watching him, but I have no doubt whatever in my own mind that he was going to extort

some money from Grisois for his good offices in recommending me to purchase his horse. Good heavens!" cried Mr. Fudge, in despair, "is there any limit to the roguery and mystification in which everything connected with horses seems to be involved? I begin to believe that this Morve, and old Porquet, and half the other inhabitants of Malaise, are all interested in the sale of this animal, and that they all have five franc shares in her, which they are in a hurry to realize."

Mr. Pinchbold looked a little grave at hearing of the supposed duplicity of M. Morve, and a serious conversation followed as to what they had better do. It ended in their coming to the conclusion that even if what they supposed was true, that, in any other direction to which they might turn, they would find just as much roguery as in this, and perhaps more, and that they must either give the thing up altogether or run some risk of being deceived.

And so at last it ended in Mr. Fudge's making an offer of eight hundred francs for the mare, upon which M. Grisois swore that he would never take less than nine, consenting, however, after a proper amount of delay and haggling, to accept eight hundred and fifty, at which price finally the bargain was concluded, not without many asseverations on M. Grisois' part that he was being ruined, and many misgivings on the part of Mr. Fudge that a similar destiny was in store for *him*. As for Mr. Pinchbold, he consoled himself for his share in the lavish expenditure by remarking that he must "stick to it in Westminster Hall for this."

And now that the mare was actually purchased and lodged in the stables of M. Dessin's Hotel—

an achievement which was not accomplished till the eight hundred francs had been deposited in M. Grisois' hands — now that the horse was secured, there was still the carriage to be bought, before that start for which the two friends were now beginning to long so earnestly could possibly be effected. The harness, it may be mentioned, had been purchased from Bijou's former owner, as it seemed a desirable thing to get a set to which the animal was accustomed.

It will be remembered that Mr. Pinchbold had made, at first sight of M. Grisois' carriole, a very pertinent objection to a two-wheeled vehicle, as likely to prove an uncomfortable conveyance for a long journey. The excursion which the two friends had made, on the occasion of Bijou's trial, had fully corroborated Mr. Pinchbold's view of the case, and both gentlemen had come to the conclusion that a four-wheeled carriage was absolutely indispensable to the comfort, and even it might be to the safety of their journey. New difficulties were created by this decision, a four-wheeled carriole being, though an exceedingly convenient, a very rare kind of carriage to find, and it was not till the very day of Bijou's purchase that Mr. Fudge, as we have seen above, was able to light upon the object of his and his companion's search. And now that it was found, they seemed hardly nearer the mark, so exorbitant was the sum demanded by the person to whom it belonged. This carriole, a sketch of which will be found on the title-page, and which need not, therefore, be described, was the property of a certain old lady who was a letter out of carriages, and who had a son who was never to be seen, and who had to be consulted. The

old lady was, or pretended to be, very deaf, and between her deafness and her son's absence, the mistakes and misunderstandings that arose were quite incredible, and ended in one which proved rather expensive to our two adventurous Englishmen. On the day when Mr. Fudge made his final offer—Madame Bruletout being incredibly deaf and her son incredibly far off—on the day when Mr. Fudge made his final offer of five hundred francs for the carriole, it was instantly accepted by this worthy lady, and there being no time for delays, and some repairs being required in the inside of the vehicle, it was arranged that the coachmaker should send for it at once, and commence operations the same day. What was Mr. Fudge's surprise, and that of his friend Mr. Pinchbold, when on the day of payment, Monsieur Bruletout, the son, who had turned up, together with the sense of hearing on the part of his mother, for the occasion, what was the surprise, let us repeat, of the two friends, when this gentleman sat down to the table and commenced very quietly writing out a receipt for *six* hundred instead of five hundred francs. There never was such an utter "do" and take-in. The carriole had been taken away, its whole interior lining had been removed, and its inside pulled to pieces, if Mr. Fudge and his friend refused to take it, they would have all this to set right, and the repairs to pay for for nothing. Besides this, the day was fixed for their departure; the lodgings given up; and as the season had now advanced so far that it would be impossible for them to start before the 1st of September, it was impossible to think of longer delays. So, after all sorts of rowing and storming, of disputing and

denying on the part of everybody, it ended in our unhappy friends being obliged to pay the six hundred francs; immediately upon which Madame Bruletout and her son became extremely amiable. The lady lamenting that her infirmity of deafness had led her to think that Mr. Fudge had said six hundred francs when he had really said five, and M. Bruletout affirming that the firm were still losers by the transaction, that he had that day been offered *seven* hundred francs for the carriole if it was still to be had, but that he bore the English gentlemen no malice, and hoped they would enjoy their journey.

"We shall get wiser as we go on, my dear Pinchbold," said Mr. Fudge, as they began to cool down, after this exciting interview, "and with this treacherous nation to deal with, shall get into habits of having everything down in black and white, and of having a witness at hand whenever we are going to make a bargain."

And now the two travellers were—certainly at some expense—in possession of all the necessary material for their start, with the world before them where to choose. Of course matters had not advanced thus far, without many and long consultations as to what was to be the termination of the voyage which they had been at such pains to organize. The conclusion finally arrived at was one which they hardly dared to talk of, even to each other, so ambitious did it appear.

It will be remembered that when Mr. Pinchbold first cast himself upon the map of France, he fixed upon two places as having a tremendous attraction in their names, and that these two places were named

respectively Ancy-le-Franc and Tonnerre. Now it happened, curiously enough, that the route which was finally selected by the two friends seemed likely enough to carry them through both these places; though it had of course not been chosen with that view.

The end of their journey was to be Geneva.

Was ever such audacity heard of? Separated by hundreds of miles of a country of which they knew nothing, with the mighty barrier of the Jura mountains at its termination, these two gentlemen of England actually set before themselves nothing less than the attempt to reach the capital of Switzerland, depending upon the aid of one solitary horse for their means of progression. It was a great undertaking. How far it was possible to achieve it the sequel will show.

It is quite certain that all persons who have had much to do with travelling, will know how difficult it is actually to get off at last. The mass of things which have to be done at the last moment, which only can be done *at* that last moment. The delays which occur in connexion with everything and everybody on whom, or on which, the start depends; the indispensable matters which are not brought home till literally "the last moment;" all these inevitable causes of being behindhand are known to everybody who has travelled even by the ordinary means of steamboats and railway trains; but of course they were in tenfold greater operation in a case like the p[illegible] when the journey, and all that was connecte[illegible] was of an eccentric kind, and wholly op[illegible] system of routine to which the Fr[illegible] wedded more firmly than any othe[illegible]

There is a wonderful and delicious sensation of bivouac about the night before a long journey. It was especially a great time for Mr. Fudge, who stood with his legs very wide apart—the effect, probably, of his recent horse transactions—and with a note-book in his hand, checked off all the things that had been purchased from the list, and continually discovering that more things were wanted, would rush out to buy them, and finding the shop shut up, would be compelled to put off once more those indispensable purchases till that last of "last moments," the morning of the start. There never was such a list as that which Mr. Fudge had drawn out. One would have thought, to look at it, that the voyage on which the two friends were about to enter, was one that would not only take them away from all the haunts of civilization, but even from the possibility of obtaining the common necessaries of life. A chafing-dish to hold fire for purposes of cooking; a huge piece of undressed bacon; a quantity of hard biscuit; a cheese; a clasp-knife; a mariner's compass; a mass of cordage, and quantities of leather straps; these, and such things as these, were conspicuous parts of the catalogue of necessaries which Mr. Fudge had drawn out; a category which included also a large flask of brandy, a complete tea equipage—of which more hereafter—of Mr. Fudge's own arrangement; a [illegible]tle of sal volatile, and some dinner-pills for Mr. [illegible]old, who seemed determined, even if in the [illegible] their voyage they were likely to be without [illegible] at any rate to be without a dinner-pill. [illegible] provided himself with these delicacies [illegible] doubt as to the wholesomeness of

the cooking which was likely to take place under Mr. Fudge's superintendence. At all events, there the things were, in company with all the other matters before specified, and many more too numerous to mention.

Mr. Fudge then passed an evening of great happiness, surrounded by all these preparations for the morrow's start; while Mr. Pinchbold, who was always very sanguine about the journey in the morning, while in the evening he invariably predicted that it would end fatally to both himself and friend; Mr. Pinchbold, we say, was in a condition of extreme depression, which all the good spirits of his friend were insufficient to dispel.

Even on the very morning—when at last it came—which was appointed for the great event of the start, there was so much to be done that it seemed quite impossible they could really get off. Besides all the packing up that had to be accomplished, there was the portmanteau full of warm things which Mr. Pinchbold had written over to England for, and which did not arrive. This rendered necessary an expedition down to the port when the steamer came in, and as the valise did not arrive by that boat, it was needful to wait till the next came. The next came, and there was still no portmanteau, and our friends had then to find the foreign agents of the London Company who had charge of its transmission, and to explain to them what had happened, which of itself took about two hours, and to leave them an address at Paris to which the package should be sent if it ever arrived. Then there was the inventory to go through at the lodgings, and every crack in every

piece of china being attributed by the mistress of the house to her two lodgers (even if the crack was black with age), there was a great deal of time lost in argument, and a great deal of money lost, too, before affairs were settled. Then it got so late that a "snack" was necessary before starting; then a settlement was necessary with Agnes, who shed tears at the parting, and who brought her child to show to the gentlemen, and if the gentlemen wanted to see before starting the wettest-nosed and the ugliest child in France, there it was. However, they had no time to notice these things, or indeed for anything else, but to hurry out of the house as quickly as possible, and get across the road to the stables where Bijou and the carriole were awaiting their arrival.

"Vous allez être bien *in*confortable," said M. Dessin, the landlord of the hotel, coming up to Mr. Fudge as he was superintending the harnessing of Bijou in the stable. "Why do you go," he continued, "by St. Omer instead of by Boulogne and Abbeville?"

Mr. Fudge modestly intimated always a friend and he had selected the former route passed, a race to the latter, because they wished to pass through a country with which they were unacquainted in preference to one which they knew.

"There is not a decent inn on the road," said M. Dessin; "oh, vous allez être bien incon[illegible]ortable. Where is Monsieur Pincebout," he continued (for that was his refreshing view of that gentleman's name); "where is Monsieur Pincebout, that I may tell him too?" he added, as if he had some very good news to [illegible]municate.

And so at last, with this warning ringing in their ears, the moment actually came when the two friends climbed to their places in the front seat of the carriole (the luggage being safely stowed at the back). Mr. Fudge gave the signal to proceed with a shake of the rein, the mare took her first step on the road to Geneva, the wheels turned round, the carriole gave a jolt forward, and so at half-past three, on the afternoon of Saturday, September the first, one thousand eight hundred and sixty—THE JOURNEY WAS BEGUN.

CHAPTER V.

TREATING OF THE PLEASANT EVENING DRIVE WHICH BROUGHT OUR TRAVELLERS TO THE TOWN OF ST. OMER, AND OF ALL THAT HAPPENED ON THE JOURNEY.

Most things in this world that we set great store by and long for very much, are so long in reaching us, or rather, we are so long commonly in attaining them, that we can hardly realize them when possession arrives at last. It was so with our two travellers. They could scarcely believe that they were really off. Was it possible that they were passing along that main street of Malaise for the last time—at any rate, for the last time for many months, perhaps years, to come? Yes, it was really so; there was the shop where the milliner's apprentice laughed whenever the two Englishmen passed, circumstance which Mr. Pinchbold always seemed to consider highly gratifying, though why, it would be hard to say. There was the pork-butcher's, where the bacon in the basket behind was purchased; there the ironmonger's, where the chafing-dish, by means of which, it was dressed, it was to be cooked. There, the late owner of Bijou standing near the town, and informing them, when they looked to him, that he had purchased the they had seen at M. Garrot's, and

which has figured in these pages under the name of the Demon-horse; that the animal, instead of advancing when placed in the shafts, made it a practice to stand upon its hind legs and paw the air with its front limbs; that he expected to be killed by this animal at no distant period, and that he wished he had never parted with his beloved Bijou, whose nose he affectionately kissed.

Clear of the town, clear of the gate, clear of the drawbridge, and entering the Faubourg of St. Jacques, which lay for a mile or two outside the fortifications, they were fairly off at last, though somewhat later than they ought to have been; but still, as the town of St. Omer, at which they were to pass the night, was at a distance of about eighteen English miles, they calculated on reaching it easily before dusk. But their delays were not over yet. Mr. Fudge had had the misfortune to lose a certain gold pin to which, as it was a gift, he attached some value, and as he had heard that this pin had been picked up by a workman residing at St. Jacques, and by him had been taken to the Commissaire de Police, it was necessary to drive round by the Mairie to try and get it back. The Commissaire was not at the Mairie, neither was he at his own house, to which our travellers drove next, and no one at either place had heard anything of the pin, so Mr. Fudge was obliged to write an exact description—with a drawing—of the missing trinket, and to leave it, accompanied with an address at Paris, to which he wished the pin to be forwarded. All this, combined with all the fuss which of course *was* combined with it, took a great deal of time, and made the two friends rather late upon the road. It

was a beautiful afternoon, however, followed by a beautiful evening, and there was still plenty of time.

The road for the first few miles did not preser much food for the intense amount of observatio which Mr. Pinchbold bestowed upon it. It was quite wonderful to see the resolute way in which this gentleman set himself to the work of profiting by his journey. The way in which he "took it out" of the landscape was really something marvellous. There was not a field, nor a hedge, nor a little wayside watercourse that he did not scrutinize in the fiercest manner, leaning his body half out of the carriole to do so.

As for Mr. Fudge, that gentleman's attention was so completely absorbed by the animal he was engaged in driving that he had eyes for nothing else. It is little known, except by old practical hands, what an extraordinary sympathy, what an almost magnetic *rapport* exists between a horse and its driver. For the first day or two, till the animal has got to know who is driving it, and got accustomed to that touch of the hand upon the rein which is different in every driver, things seldom go on quite comfortably. There is a tendency in all animals, in dogs as well as horses, to test the strength of their proprietor, to gauge him, and take his measure completely, to see how far he may be trifled with, intimidated, or set at nought; and in proportion to the conviction which is the result of this test, is the respect and affection of the animal for its master. An animal may get to love a tyrant, but never a person who fears or toadies it.

Now Mr. Fudge was engaged all this time in practically experiencing the truth of this theory which we

have ventured to put forward. Even Bijou, who was in reality, as her owner had boasted, a beast possessed of a most perfect temper, even she had discovered that a new hand was on the rein, and was trying what sort of a master she had got, and whether her one vice of laziness was likely to be indulged or resisted by her new proprietor. The manner in which this was developed in her goings-on was rather amusing, and, at the same time, somewhat provoking. She was continually wanting to relax her pace, and exchange the jog-trot, at which Mr. Fudge thought it desirable to keep her, for a walk. Every variation in the road, however slight, was made an excuse for these attempts. A bridge over a mere ditch, or an acclivity of half-a-dozen yards, would be quite enough to produce a relaxation of pace; so would the passing of any other vehicle which they happened to meet, or even the encounter of a cow, or half-a-dozen sheep. At every auberge, too, that they passed, the mare regularly made an attempt to diverge from the straight course, in order to pull up before it—a practice suggestive of convivial habits on the part of her former proprietor—while at every place where two roads met, or so much as a lane diverged from the main thoroughfare, a burning desire appeared to consume this remarkable animal for exploring the new route, possibly in a vague hope that a stable might turn up at the end of it.

Although the acquisition of Bijou was the first horse-transaction in which Mr. Fudge had been engaged, that gentleman knew quite enough of horses to be perfectly aware that it never does to give in to an animal; and that by means of the two great qualities of patience and perseverance it would be easy

enough to become the master of such a horse as Bijou in a very short time.

"What is the matter with her?" asked Mr. Pinchbold; his attention being at last caught by an exclamation of irritability on the part of his companion.

"She's only trying her strength," replied Mr. Fudge.

"I hope not," ejaculated Mr. Pinchbold; "for she seems to me to have a great deal of it."

"She is trying to find out," continued Mr. Fudge, "whether her future career in our hands is to be one of obedience on her part, or of thraldom on ours."

"And which," inquired Mr. Pinchbold, hesitatingly, "which do you think is the safest?"

"I don't know which may be the safest," replied Mr. Fudge, "but I know this much as a general rule, that whenever the legitimate and rightful superior gives in to the inferior, there is an end of all happiness to either party."

"Well, then," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, "I suppose that *we* had better give in, for certainly she is the superior in point of strength."

"I think we can tackle her," said Mr. Fudge, laughing at the ingenious way in which his companion had distorted his theory; and, indeed, by the steadiness of hand, the regular undeviating consistency of his determination, and, at the same time, the good temper with which Mr. Fudge adhered to his purpose, there did not seem to be much doubt that, in a very short time, Bijou would recognise her master, and that she would not be long in finding out that resistance was of no use.

The attention of our two travellers was now caught by a sufficiently curious freak, not of nature but of art, which the part of the road they had arrived at disclosed to their view. It was a place where four perfectly straight canals met, while at the point of their junction was a high bridge, over which the road passed, so that the two roads—that by which they had come and that by which they were to go on—and the four canals all seemed to diverge from one point, which was like the centre of a star, or, as Mr. Pinchbold remarked, "like that flag which is dear to the heart of every Englishman—the Union Jack."

It may be here remarked that Mr. Pinchbold's nationality always grew to a great height upon a foreign soil, and that he always seemed to consider himself, when he had crossed the Channel, in the light rather of a hardly-used exile than one journeying of his own freewill, and for pleasure.

The two friends paused long enough on the top of the bridge to observe the phenomenon of the Union Jack, which was really very curious, and not, in a certain way, unpicturesque; and having done it perfect justice, betook themselves once more to their journey. The road lay straight for some miles till it brought them within sight of the little town of Ardres, which lies perched up on a small hill, looking like a city in the background of an old picture, and with a great, swampy, dismal-looking lake spread out before it at the foot of the hill. The road to St. Omer did not lie through the town, but turned off sharply to the left, and from this point became extremely pretty, bordered on either side by cultivated fields, varied with little patches of wood, the foliage of which had

just attained that rich colour which, like the culminating point of all perfection, preceded decay. The next stage was autumn.

It was a glorious evening; and a golden tinge from the sun, which was now nearing the horizon, was spread over the whole country as it lay before our two travellers. Never was happiness more complete than theirs. There come times like this when all things suddenly seem to accord together to make a man, in the fullest sense of the word, happy. His humours are all at rest; there is some happy concord between mind and body, between the scene without and the sensations within, haply a thing which degrees of temperature, and even of light, may effect; certainly a condition to which congenial companionship is indispensable. Alas! there are those who hold that such moments as these are (like the culminating point of beauty attained, as we have just said, by autumn foliage) not of long duration, and are too often the harbingers of discomfort.

Without troubling themselves to philosophize on such questions as these, our two friends were contented simply and wisely to seize the joy of the hour as it came, and to make the most of it, without troubling themselves about the future. Mr. Pinchbold lay back in his seat luxuriously, and divided his time between a lazy watching of Bijou's white ears and an occasional glance at the scene through which they were passing: while even Mr. Fudge indulged himself by assuming as easy a position as the cares of driving rendered possible. Neither gentleman seemed to care to speak, and beyond a passing exclamation of "How beautiful it is!" or, "Isn't this a

delightful way of travelling?" they were perfectly silent.

They had been jogging along in this way for about an hour after losing sight of Ardres, and Bijou, probably convinced by reflection that the stable she was going to in front was now nearer than the stable she was coming away from behind, was getting along at a pleasanter and more even pace. They had been jogging along thus, we repeat, for about an hour, when gradually there developed itself a slight alteration in the appearance and conduct of our two travellers. It was, as has been said, the slightest thing in the world—a little change of posture, the new one having a trifle less of abandonment and repose about it than the old. A disposition on the part of Mr. Fudge to bestow all that attention which had before wandered to the country around, exclusively on Bijou's ears, and a tendency in Mr. Pinchbold to do the like, these things would have been observable, if there had been anybody by to observe them; but these things were not much. It was not much, either, that Mr. Pinchbold would occasionally steal a furtive glance at Mr. Fudge, to see what he was looking at, and that Mr. Fudge would steal a furtive glance now and then at Mr. Pinchbold, to see what *he* was looking at, and that each gentleman would turn hastily away and hum a tune when thus discovered. Neither was it much that both Mr. Fudge and Mr. Pinchbold were characterized by a slight depression of the corners of their mouths, and by a more eager stare than existed in their normal condition. These things were not much; but, much or little, there these things were.

At last Mr. Fudge seemed to have got the length of addressing his companion, and had even uttered, hesitatingly, a premonitory "er;" but he stopped, and changed it into a cough, while Mr. Pinchbold exactly at the same moment also began to speak, and also changed his remark into a clearance of throat, which sounded like the subterfuge it was.

"You were going to speak?" "What were you going to say?" were the two questions which emerged simultaneously from the mouths of Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold.

"Nothing;" "Nothing;" was each gentleman's answer.

"No; but what *were* you going to say?" inquired Mr. Pinchbold, eagerly, though not looking at his companion, but still at Bijou's ears.

"Oh, nothing of any consequence," replied Mr. Fudge. "You were about to—"

"Fudge!" ejaculated Mr. Pinchbold, solemnly; "you are concealing some horrible thing from me. What is it?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Mr. Fudge once more, in a careless manner. "I only thought that you seemed to be staring very intently at Bijou's ears, and I was going to ask you the reason—that's all."

"What an extraordinary circumstance," said Mr. Pinchbold; "the very thing which I had remarked about you, and which I was going to ask an explanation of."

"How very curious," remarked Mr. Fudge. "But tell me *why* were you watching her movements so closely?"

"Well, why were you, if you come to that?" retorted the other.

"It's no use going on like this," Mr. Fudge answered, desperately. "The fact is, that I fancied—but I see now it *was* only fancy—that I detected at times—"

"Detected what?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, eagerly, seeing that his friend hesitated.

"Oh, nothing—ridiculous—not worth speaking of—I see now that it was outrageous."

"Well, but," replied Mr. Pinchbold, "I also, if the truth must be told, fancied that I detected something, which I, *also*, now see to be outrageous."

"In the name of goodness, then, what was it?" demanded Mr. Fudge, breathlessly.

"Well, if you will have it," said Mr. Pinchbold, with a feeble attempt at a laugh, "I fancied for one moment that I observed in the carriage of Bijou's left ear something faintly and distantly approaching an occasional—an occasional—"

"Not a limp?" ejaculated Mr. Fudge, faintly.

Mr. Pinchbold turned round, and looking piteously at his friend, nodded a rueful assent.

It was a dreadful moment. The mere fact of such a suspicion as this, which Mr. Pinchbold had owned to having entered that gentleman's mind for a moment, would have been bad enough, even if that had been all. But that was *not* all. The dreadful apprehension had been shared by Mr. Fudge; and he, too, was obliged to own that long before Mr. Pinchbold had spoken, his mind was tormented with the same horrible thought by which his friend had been assailed.

The most wonderful part of the whole business, however, was, that neither Mr. Fudge nor Mr. Pinchbold were in a position to pronounce definitely whether there was, after all, any foundation for their suspicions. The lameness which each of them had fancied he could detect was so slight—if, indeed, it existed at all—was so intermittent, was so completely a thing that one might be mistaken about, that it really seemed impossible to speak about it with any degree of certainty. Nay, so completely would the fancied limp disappear at times, that the two friends would get to be quite jocose about it, and to wonder how it had ever happened that such a nonsensical thing had ever entered their heads. And so they would go on, alternately fancying they could detect something approximating to a limp, and then feeling sure that it *was* only fancy, till by the time that the dusk of the evening had set in, they had got themselves into a complete state of mystification on the subject; the impression which had attained the ascendancy, however, being most decidedly that they had been victims of a delusion, and that the mare was no more lame than either of the two gentlemen who sat in the carriole behind her.

It was quite dark—so much so, that Mr. Fudge was obliged to get out and light the lamps—before the road gave any indications of proximity to a town. Mr. Fudge was beginning to doubt whether they had not been misinformed about the distance, and Mr. Pinchbold was beginning to be convinced that they had mistaken the way, when a change in the nature of the road on which they were travelling, from macadamization to pavement, and the sudden springing

up of a row of trees on each side of the thoroughfare, convinced them that at length they were nearing a town.

And now, once more, the excitement and interest of a journey such as that in which the two Englishmen were engaged. Surely there was a great charm about the mere fact of arriving thus at a totally strange place, not knowing what it was like, what sort of an inn they were going to put up at, what kind of *cuisine*, what development of bed awaited them. To Mr. Fudge, especially, all this was singularly delightful and strangely congenial to his nature: and Mr. Pinchbold in his way enjoyed it too, not a little, though he doubtless would have enjoyed it more but for a settled conviction which had possession of his mind, that both he and his friend would infallibly be found, when the morning dawned, with their throats cut from ear to ear. For Mr. Pinchbold had taken his notions of the smaller inns in France from the auberges he had seen set up upon the stage, and from the descriptions of cut-throat cabarets which he had met with in romances.

The long, straight thoroughfare, with the trees on either side of it, and paved with stones each about the size of a quartern loaf, on which our Englishmen had now entered, seemed quite interminable. It was so dark, too, owing to the trees, that when a vehicle approached them it was almost impossible to see it, and the chief safety of the travellers consisted in the light which they carried with them, and in which Bijou's white hide blazed conspicuously enough. The curious part of it all was, that strain their eyes forward as much as they might, they saw no lights in front of

them to give evidence of the near neighbourhood of a town, and but for the pavement and the carts which they met now and then, they might have thought themselves very far from any human habitation; and it was not till they were actually at the very gates of the town that they had any idea how near they were to their resting-place for the night. The apparition of a man with a lantern in his hand springing out of some concealed place at the side of the road, and arresting the course of the carriole to demand if they had anything to declare, was the first intimation they received of their having reached the gates of the town; an intimation, by the bye, which alarmed Mr. Pinchbold—who of course took the Douanier for a robber—to such an extent that he quite gave himself up for lost.

Mr. Fudge having answered in the negative, the two friends were allowed to pass on, and were accorded free access to the town of St. Omer. It was rather difficult pilotage, the entrance to the fortifications being across the narrowest and rumblingest drawbridge that ever was seen, and through a long winding tunnel which was about the size of a London sewer, and so tight a fit that Mr. Fudge had at one time doubts as to whether they would not have to leave the carriole for the night outside the city gates.

"Heavens! what a place," was Mr. Pinchbold's exclamation as, the passage of the tunnel safely achieved, the travellers found themselves as far as they could see in a sort of little narrow lane, forming a tolerably steep ascent, and with scarcely a glimmer of light to make their way plain before them. There was hardly any one to be seen, and the houses and

shops, if there were any, were as much shut up as if it had been midnight, instead of eight o'clock in the evening. Between the ascent and the darkness it was impossible to go at more than a foot pace, so that it was quite a long time before at last the carriole turned out of the long narrow thoroughfare, which Mr. Pinchbold had pleasantly predicted would turn out to be the town of St. Omer, and emerged into a great, bare, dismal-looking Place, with a great, bare, dismal-looking Town Hall in the middle of it, and two or three gaunt cafés showing just light enough to make their full measure of dolefulness conspicuous.

Stopping at one of these, from which one of the inhabitants of St. Omer was just emerging, Mr. Fudge inquired his way to the Hotel de la Porte d'Or, for he had taken the precaution before leaving Malaise of ascertaining where they would have the best chance of tolerable entertainment.

"You will not find tolerable entertainment anywhere between this and Amiens," M. Dessin had said when Mr. Fudge had questioned him on the subject; "but since you are determined to go to St. Omer, you had better put up at the Porte d'Or."

"You will go across the Place, and after that up a little street, and then you will arrive at a smaller Place, and you will go across that also; after which you will see two streets, and you will take the one to the left, and that will take you straight to the hotel."

This was the direction given by the worthy inhabitant whom Mr. Fudge had accosted; and following it implicitly, and not making more than two serious mistakes by the way, our travellers found themselves at last opposite the gates of a great barren house, on

which they could just make out the words, Hotel de la Porte d'Or. Mr. Fudge turned the mare's head into the gates, and in another moment they were in the inn-yard.

Hardly ever—never, one may almost say—does one seem to be expected at a French inn of the smaller class. There is nothing ready for you, and the ostler especially is a person who is never forthcoming. When our two travellers drove into the inn-yard at St. Omer, a great hobbling wench, who tumbled along as if she had corns, who was nearly six feet high, and every feature of whose great flat face betokened the most radiant good-nature, came out with a flaring candle, not even placed in a flat candlestick, held in her hand. The ostler was away, she said; but he should be fetched: wouldn't the two gentlemen walk in? The two gentlemen declining this invitation on account of their unwillingness to abandon Bijou to her fate, the good-natured wench seemed unable to suggest anything else, and stood staring at them as if they were beings wholly removed from anything she had ever seen before. Then the rest of the establishment would come out of the kitchen and stare too. There appeared to be about eight old women, who looked like charwomen, attached to the premises, and they all came out and stared by turns. A sulky-looking man-cook in a white cap just gave a glance at them and retired again; and nobody seemed to have the slightest notion of assisting them except the good-natured wench, who, suddenly retiring, re-appeared presently with a paralytic old man, who, in the absence of the ostler, undertook to take Bijou out of the carriole and put her up for the night.

Having seen this achievement carried out—the infirmities of the deputy-ostler requiring all the assistance that was to be had—the two friends left Bijou eating her oats in a little stable which she had all to herself, and which would only just hold her, and found their way into the salle-à-manger, in search of that most delightful (and indigestible) of all the meals we sit down to—a supper.

The good-natured wench re-appeared at this meal, and waited upon them in a condition of astonishment which bordered on frenzy. Everything they did, every opening of their mouths to eat or speak, seemed to drive her into deeper and deeper abysses of wonder; and many were the knocks and contusions which she inflicted on herself and on the different vessels which it was her function to carry, from the difficulty which she evidently found in taking her eyes off the two strangers.

If travelling had given our Englishmen an appetite which made the vermicelli soup, the cutlets, and fried potatoes, of which their meal consisted, to appear the most delightful of food, it had also given them such a longing to get to bed as a journey through the open air, followed by a warm meal, alone will produce. There is, in truth, nothing like a change to make a man sleep; and what a change this was! Here they were actually off, and a stage on their journey—the journey talked about at first as almost an impossibility—the journey which so many obstacles had come in the way of—the journey so long delayed; for it was on the fifteenth of August that it was first projected, and it was now the first day of September — this journey was really and truly

begun, and they were sleeping at the first inn on the road.

Certainly Mr. Pinchbold was a difficult gentleman to settle in an apartment at night: he must have a door that would lock to his taste; he must have any other doors that were in the walls of the room opened that he might see where they led to, and must then have them locked again and the key given into his own charge; he must be assured that the bell was in good working order, and must be informed on a variety of other equally important matters before he could be finally induced to subside for the night. His room was next to that occupied by Mr. Fudge, and that gentleman heard him (long after he was himself in bed) opening cupboards and moving furniture about as if he would never get to bed at all. The fact is, that Mr. Pinchbold, before he could retire for the night with any sense of security, was in the habit of going through a series of rites which were enough to deter a man from going to bed at all. He must look under the bed and behind the curtains, and into every cupboard, or any other receptacle capable of holding a child six months old. He must try all the doors once more, and having locked them, must arrange a barricade besides, which was so artfully designed, with a tilted chair at the bottom and a washing-basin at the top, that the slightest attempt to enter must infallibly produce a crash which was calculated to appal the sturdiest housebreaker in Europe—a crash, by the bye, which not unfrequently took place with no housebreaker at all, the basin being so artfully balanced that the movement made by Mr. P. himself in crossing the room would some-

times spread the whole fabric, so skilfully erected, in complicated ruin on the floor.

Mr. Fudge, who had been listening dreamily to Mr. Pinchbold's trampings and bumpings in the next room, was just dropping off to sleep, when he was aroused by hearing the door of his companion's room open, and presently a gentle tap at his own.

"Come in," cried Mr. Fudge, without rising; and instantly Mr. Pinchbold entered the apartment bearing a candle in his hand, and with a countenance of ashy palor.

"Good heavens! Fudge," he said, to begin with; "can you sleep with your door like that, so that anybody can come in?" And then he went on in a mysterious tone, "I say, Fudge, I am afraid we must leave this hotel, or inn, or whatever you call it, at once."

"Leave it!" echoed Mr. Fudge. "What do you mean?"

"I have just seen something," answered Mr. Pinchbold, "which convinces me that it is not a safe place to sleep in. Oh! why did we ever attempt this fearful journey?"

"But what is the matter, my dear fellow?" Mr. Fudge asked, roused in spite of his knowledge of his friend's weaknesses, and leaning up upon his elbow—"what the deuce is the matter?"

"There is a notice pasted up upon my bedroom door which convinces me that we are either in a house which is frequented by dangerous characters, or else that the landlord—whom, mind you, we have never seen—is one himself. Stay," continued Mr. Pinchbold, looking up at Mr. Fudge's door; "now I look, there is the same thing on *your* door."

Mr. Fudge looked in the direction indicated by his friend, and saw a little card with something printed on it nailed up on one of the panels.

"What is it?" he inquired.

Mr. Pinchbold held his candle up to the document and read the following announcement:—

"MM. the travellers who may rest at this inn are requested to give into the hands of the master of the hotel the funds or other objects of value which they may have about them, and the security of which they wish to ensure."

"There," said Mr. Pinchbold, when he had done reading, "what does that indicate?"

"Is that all?" was Mr. Fudge's answer. He was getting sleepy again.

"All!" echoed Mr. Pinchbold; "don't you mean to go?"

"No; on no account," said Mr. Fudge; "why should we?"

"Why should they put that up if there was no danger of thieves?" asked Mr. Pinchbold.

"Oh, it's only a form," muttered Mr. Fudge, half asleep already. "Good-night."

"You're never going to sleep with that announcement over your head?" the wretched Pinchbold expostulated.

"Good-night, Pinchbold," murmured Mr. Fudge.

"Well, at any rate, you'll get up and lock your door."

"No, thank you."

"Well, a barricade."

"No, thank you."

"Not so much as a tilted chair?"

But Mr. Fudge gave no answer, for he was fast asleep; and Mr. Pinchbold was constrained to content himself with placing an additional water-jug upon the top of his own barricade; after which he followed his friend's example, and, in spite of his fears, was soon fast asleep.

The next day was Sunday, and as the two friends had resolved before starting on their journey that, wherever they might find themselves on Saturday night, there they would remain till Monday morning, they had a day of rest at St. Omer. The reader will not care to hear much about the characteristics of the town. Let him suppose a page out of Mr. Murray's admirable guide-book here. What is furnished there is in every one's hands, and the present writer has no right or desire to pillage it.

It was a blazing hot afternoon, and our two friends spent it in wandering round the ramparts of the town, and in loitering by the black waters of the moat which hems the city in. It was a happy time. Mr. Pinchbold made some notes for his journal—for if that gentleman's character has been sketched here with any approach to truthfulness, the reader will have felt convinced by this time that he *must* have kept a journal—Mr. Pinchbold made some notes, and Mr. Fudge, reclining on the long grass by the side of the water, abandoned himself to the full enjoyment of the scene before him.

To such a nature as that of David Fudge, the kind of life on which he and his friend had now entered was singularly congenial. It has been already hinted at the beginning of this authentic narrative, that this

gentleman was of a romantic turn of mind, and had in him strong leanings towards a life of seclusion and isolation from his fellow-men. The fact is, that our friend was subject—as many have been before him—to periodical fits; of disgust with the world about him; and when one of these seizures came upon him, he would, if his purse happened at the time to be full enough, betake himself to the Continent, and there remain till his appetite for civilization revived, or his affairs called him back again. It was the fault partly of his profession, partly of his time of life, that these fits came upon him. We have said of "his time of life." He had lived just long enough to get thoroughly disgusted with all the abominations of social life which he saw around him at home. He had *not* lived long enough to get reconciled to the evil for the sake of the good. The time, however, was not far off when this reaction might be looked for in him; for our Englishman was no cynic, and even in his hottest mood of misanthropy (which would never make him wish ill to any human being), he always felt that he was not doing right to indulge it, and that to retire from the rest of the world and shut oneself up *in* oneself is a course which, if it is not really strongly tinctured with pride, at any rate lays him who adopts it singularly open to that imputation.

What a thing to be there by that great calm pool of water, with those huge masses of wall above him, and the great elms planted along the ramparts. What a thing to know no one in the place but honest Mr. Pinchbold, whom, with all his weaknesses, he knew enough of to respect. What a thing to be out of earshot of the malignant gossip which forms so staple

a commodity in the ordinary conversation of London cliques. To have no one flattering him—for there are flatterers for everybody if they will hear them—no one lying in wait to put him down. Splash!—what a monstrous carp that must be to come walloping up to the top of the water. This is just the kind of place for such gentry. I can see his great back-fin sticking out of the water now as he lies basking in the heat at the top. There is a man fishing yonder, with a long reed for a fishing-rod. He will never catch that old carp, though. He has caught a roach, but a roach is not a carp. I wonder why the worthless thing is always easy of attainment, and the desirable thing always hard to come at. When this moat was first dug, and those walls built, how solidly the beggars went to work; and the cathedral tower, up yonder in the town—we don't build like that now. Certainly, solidity is not the characteristic of our day. "Will it do?" is our inquiry—"Oh, it will do," is our answer. We don't do our work enough for itself—enjoying and revelling in the thing as it goes on. If I ever live to write another book, I will make a resolution never to think once of what the publisher will give for it in money, or what the ladies of my literary clique will give for it in praise.

"Are there two a's, or only one, in agreeable?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, who was busy with his notes.

And so, the reflections of Mr. Fudge being broken, and it being also near the hour of the *table-d'hôte* at the inn, the two friends got up to go.

The travellers had a long journey before them the next day. They had determined on striking across at once from St. Omer to a place called *St. Pol*, a

town the name of which certainly conveyed the idea of something wild and outlandish, and the situation of which upon the map, far away from any railroad, seemed to augur a wonderful degree of uncivilization. It was at St. Pol that Mr. Pinchbold had calmly settled that both he and his friend were to be finally disposed of, and it was after arriving at that mysterious little city that he felt convinced all traces of them would be lost for ever. The distance from St. Omer to St. Pol was given by some as amounting to twelve, by others to thirteen leagues; and supposing the latter report to be the right one, they would have before them a journey of about eight-and-thirty miles, or, to adopt the French measurement, of fifty-two kilometres, the proportion of kilometres being about four to three—that is to say, that three miles would be four kilometres, six miles eight, nine miles twelve, and so on. It was something of an undertaking, and Mr. Fudge paid frequent visits to the stable in the course of the evening to look after the animal on whom they were so utterly dependent. He saw her fed and made comfortable, and lingered still, after all, to feast his eyes upon her fair proportions—the mare looking, in truth, as her white form stood out against the darkness of the stable, as comely a beast as you would wish to see.

Having to be up at five o'clock the next morning, it is unnecessary to say that the two travellers retired at an early hour to their respective rooms; and Mr. Pinchbold having made an entry in his journal, and Mr. Fudge having balanced the accounts, they were both asleep by the time that the clock struck ten.

It was part of Mr. Pinchbold's system of keeping a diary to enter, sometimes in a couple of lines, sometimes in as many pages, a description of the bedchamber in which he passed the night. Whether this was done that, in case of an attack—and we must remember that he expected to have his life attempted every night—he might be able, if he survived, to recal all those places behind which hidden machinery of destruction might lurk, or which might veil a trap-door, or other secret means of access to his chamber,—whether this was the motive of Mr. Pinchbold's course of action, it is impossible to say; but it is quite certain that it was so, and that some sort of description of his sleeping apartment, long or short, was invariably attempted.

As his diary is lying open on the table of his bedroom, and as all the contrivances and barricades in the world cannot keep us out, we will now take a glance at the document in question, and see what Mr. P. says of his bedchamber at the Hotel de la Porte d'Or, St. Omer.

"A long strip of a room," Mr. Pinchbold writes, "with two beds against the long side of the apartment; an apalling notice on the door requesting MM. the travellers to leave their money, or other valuables, in the hands of the master of the hotel; who is, by the bye, a bewildered-looking old man, with hair standing on end, who wanders about the house, nobody taking any notice of him, and seeming to have less to do with the government of the hotel than any one else in the place.

"There is a suspicious-looking stove (which I cannot open), which looks like a thin China column,

and stands in an alcove. On the walls are four prints after as many bad pictures by Greuze.

"The first is called 'Filial Affection.' An old sinner, who richly deserves his fate, is being bored to death by numerous surrounding relatives. An elderly son approaches with a saucer full of some horrible garbage, which he is going to supply with the *small* end of a teaspoon. This son has a napkin over his arm. An old woman is mending a shirt, which the old man obviously will never want again. A child, in liquor, is staggering forward with a cup; another child is tugging at the old man's pillow; yet another is pulling at his leg-wrappers; and a fourth is boring him with a live sparrow, which it holds under his chin. The unfortunate old man has a beseeching expression in his countenance, as if entreating to be left alone.

"The second print is called 'Example of Humanity.' A healthy, middle-aged couple are lying in bed very comfortably; a boy is lounging by the side fiddling with a broom. A fine lady, passionately attitudinizing, directs her little daughter to give a purse which she, the daughter, holds in her hand, to the lazy couple. The little girl very properly resists. A Beguin, or Sister of Charity, scowls in the middle distance.

"The third print is called 'The Ungrateful Son.' An awful (and hale) old scoundrel is cursing a very weak young man with a violence horrible to behold. The son is starting off his chair, and flying in terror. A child is holding him by the waistcoat-pocket. A woman is trying to stop the old man; another is trying to keep the young one; a boy between both, undecided who to side with. A very

pleasant fellow, in a three-cornered hat, waiting at the door for the son, ready for a social evening; incapable of anything worse.

"The fourth print is without a name; perhaps 'The Ungrateful Son's Return.' Old man holding forth; son, nearly as old, comes in with a young girl hanging on his arm; old woman shaking hands with her. She has a bad bargain in the son, who looks by no means a pleasing specimen of humanity. Various females look on reproachfully. An oldish man, impossible to account for, scrutinizes the newly-arrived ones from a side table. They will have a dull evening of it."

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CHAPTER VI.

A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY; A DINNER IN GOOD COMPANY; A SUPPER IN BAD COMPANY; AND OTHER MATTERS WHICH SHALL BE LEFT FOR THE READER TO DISCOVER.

"I FEEL as if I was going to be hung!" said Mr. Pinchbold, sitting up in bed, and looking despairingly about him.

There are few persons, except those habitually accustomed to such proceedings, who will not feel very much as Mr. Pinchbold did when they are called upon to get up by candlelight. It is as bad as going to bed by daylight. There is evidently some element in the composition of humanity which produces a craving for a difference between the light it goes to bed by and that by whose aid it rises in the morning. To wake up, and instead of being greeted by the cool grey light of morning, to have a flickering candle flaring before ones eyes, is certainly a wretched sensation. Then, who is there that does not associate this waking up to a candle-lighted room with sickness, his own or another's? Some night-alarm or some night-disaster lives in most people's memories, when they have been hastily aroused, and found some one, candle in hand, standing by the bedside.

So Mr. Pinchbold having sprung out of bed to let

his friend in, when he came to awaken him, and having just gone back again to settle his ideas before finally rising, Mr. Pinchbold, we say, sat up in bed, and gave vent to the remark with which this chapter opens.

It is a great mistake—and our travellers soon found out that it was so—to attempt, when travelling on the continent, to achieve an early breakfast. The cook is not up, the fire is not properly lit, perhaps not lit at all; nothing is ready, nobody is willing. An early breakfast is unknown among foreigners; and we should never attempt it when travelling unless at very large towns, where there are hotels that are frequented by people of all the nations under heaven.

The preparation for the breakfast, which Mr. Fudge had rashly ordered, took so long that it was past eight o'clock before everything was ready for the start.

The breakfast itself was an utter failure; the cook was heard swearing in the kitchen, this great artist having been roused at least two hours before it was his wont to descend to the scene of his triumphs. Altogether, then, this waiting for the breakfast was a great mistake, and though they got off soon after eight in the morning, it was not early enough.

It was early enough, however, to be still "the first thing in the morning;" and as our two friends drove out of the inn-yard—having first received directions with regard to their route, and information as to the name of the inn where they should put up at St. Pol—as they drove out into the streets of the town, they both felt that it would be impossible to hit upon anything more enjoyable than this journey promised

to be, and that it exceeded in pleasure and excitement their most sanguine anticipations.

It was a lovely morning. The light of the still newly risen sun had that peculiar tenderness in it which is no longer observable after ten o'clock in the forenoon, and every house they passed seemed to wear a happy look that made the little town to seem quite interesting and beautiful. Our friends had still to wind some time about its narrow streets before they found the gate at the opposite extremity to that by which they entered St. Omer; the gate on the main road to Amiens, which town they expected to reach (it being now Monday morning) on Wednesday.

But if the town of St. Omer looked beautiful by reason of its being illuminated by the morning sun, how much more did the country outside seem fresh and charming. Once outside the gates, their course lay along a straight road, similar to that by which they had entered the town, and shaded by an avenue of trees. To persons less disposed to see all *en rose* than our two Englishmen, the country on each side of the road might not have seemed very beautiful, the truth being that it was something flat and monotonous; but seen by the light of the morning sun, and through the medium of a determination to be pleased with everything, those green pastures and those yellow corn-fields seemed the perfection of scenery. As the historian of the journey undertaken by Mr. Fudge and his friend, I cannot help dwelling with extreme gratification upon this second day of their life in the carriole. The enterprise had now, in addition to the real charm that belonged to it, the freshness and novelty which attaches to the beginning

of everything. The country was new, for it was with the towns of France only, and not its country, that the two travellers had hitherto been acquainted.

"What," said Mr. Fudge, performing a perfect salute of cracks with his whip, to which Bijou responded with the music of her bells, "what pleasures has the town got to give that are worth one hour of such enjoyment as this? Fancy what is going on in London at this moment, and what will go on all through the day. Fancy the bald chat, the faded gossip, the undue importance attached to the small produce of small brains, the flatterings, the toadyings, and the venom spittings, which will add new defilement to the already polluted air. I do not suppose," continued Mr. Fudge, "that I am less intellectual than other people, but I must own that I cannot understand the small value which seems ordinarily to be set upon pleasures such as these, in which I suppose it would generally be considered that intellect takes little or no part. I am breaking a lance, however," said Mr. Fudge, interrupting himself, "against a man of straw; it is only, after all, the smaller fry of the intellectual world who are always occupied with shop. The true man of intellect is never a cockney, and rarely, if ever, the hero of intellectual sets; the truly great among such men are always worshippers of nature; and among those two or three whom it has been my lot to know, I have heard far more expressions of enthusiasm concerning the delights which we get for nothing out of the four elements than all the achievements of human brains have been able to call forth. Air! air!" cried Mr. Fudge, "fresh air like this, grass grown earth around me, the sea, or the river to plunge into for refreshment or cleanliness—"

"I did not know you could swim, Fudge," said Mr. Pinchbold.

"And the fire to warm me when the evening closes in," continued Mr. F., regardless of interruption, "these are the pleasures for me."

"You must not," said Mr. Pinchbold, "underrate too much what is intellectual; the good fire you speak of will be all the better if you sit before it with a good book in your hand."

"Look at these country people," said Mr. Fudge, after assenting to Mr. Pinchbold's apposite remark. "Look at these country people——"

"They have rather a truculent aspect," said Mr. Pinchbold.

"Look at that carter, with his comely white horses jingling so gaily along the road. Look at those sturdy wenches with their covered baskets, the contents of which they will sell for a few sous in the town. Look at those ploughmen yonder turning up those clods of fresh smelling earth. Do you know, there are times when I envy the lot of these peasants, because their craft keeps them of necessity with the sky above their heads; because every such morning as this that breaks upon the earth, they have the benefit of from its earliest ray, whilst I am asleep in the town, or busy, with cramped fingers and flaccid muscles, at a desk. If I dare to go out to get a sniff of morning air, my day's work is spoilt; and so such days dawn in the morning and blaze away in all their midday splendour, wasted, as far as I am concerned, and lost; happy if I can crawl out when the best of the day is over and bask a little in its decline."

"There is good in it all," said Mr. Pinchbold. "See

when you get a chance like this, how you enjoy it. Those peasants you talk about cannot feel the delight of such a morning as this. They think only of the hardship of being up so early; their notion of pleasure is to get away from their ploughs or their teams, and shut themselves up in a close room, to put off their picturesque and easy costume, and fetter themselves in such mimicry of the townsman's dress as is within their reach. You could not stand the uncivilized existence you are raving about if you had it. You would be sick of it in six months."

"Well, I can only say," said Mr. Fudge, "that I have never had my fill yet of a life under the open sky; but, perhaps, by the time we get to Geneva I may begin to feel an appetite for civilization. Suppose now we do our accounts."

It was one of Mr. Pinchbold's functions to sit very upright in the carriole, and with a small account-book in one hand and a pencil in the other, with his elbows as much as possible detached from all contact of a jogging nature, to note down all the expenses contracted in the course of the journey. The results of these calculations, going generally to prove, first, that he and his friend were spending a great deal; and, secondly, that he "would have to stick to it in Westminster Hall" on his return.

And so, with an occasional note in the diary, with occasional snatches of conversation, and sometimes, it must be acknowledged, with snatches of song, with occasional gettings down to walk up-hill and stoppages to look at anything worthy of note, the two companions jogged along as happy as princes.

And Bijou. What, the reader will ask, has become

of that suspected limp which was the cause of so much anxiety to both the travellers on the road to St. Omer? It will be remembered that, as they approached that town, both gentlemen had arrived at an almost settled conviction that their apprehensions on that subject had been without foundation; and now, on the morning of their fresh start, they saw no reason to change this opinion. And, indeed, whether when walking up the hills, as we have said, they marched alongside of the stately beast, or sat behind her as she trotted along upon the level ground, it did seem very unreasonable to have any doubts about Bijou's soundness. Slow she might be, and was, but it was not difficult to keep her up to her work, and at a crack of the whip, or a shout of encouragement from Mr. Fudge, she would jingle her bells, and putting down her head to get the advantage of its weight, would trot along in a style that promised that the journey to Geneva would one of these days be accomplished after all. It must not be supposed, however, that with the memory of their last day's journey still in their minds, the two friends felt altogether secure, and many were the eager glances and very close the attention with which Bijou's movements were watched by both gentlemen; but more especially by Mr. Fudge, the only blemish in whose enjoyment of the morning consisted of a half fear that he might in the course of the day see something suggestive of a limp.

After a couple of hours' travelling away from St. Omer, there was the excitement of a town to pass through. The town of Aire, with its moat and drawbridge, and its walls and portcullis—as if anybody

wanted to meddle with Aire—all complete, just as had been the case with St. Omer. There is something compact and comfortable though, after all, about a fortified town; and when it was the fashion to close the gates at nightfall, the sensation of those inside must have been very snug, like those of householders at night when the bolts and bars are being secured and all made snug for the hours of darkness.

The midday resting-place of the travellers was not to be at Aire, though Bijou seemed to think the little town well adapted to the purpose, and manifested a great reluctance to quit it. There was a village, however, some miles further on, which divided the day's journey better, and here, as Mr. Fudge, who had got all the information he could about the road before starting, had heard that there was a good auberge, they had determined to pause for a couple of hours for purposes of refreshment. They reached St. Hilaire, which was the name of the village, a little after midday.

The moment of their arrival seemed at first rather inopportune, and the company assembled already at the auberge seemed rather disposed to regard them in the light of intruders. This company, which was not a large one, was assembled in a sort of kitchen, into which Mr. Fudge and his companion were shown after they had disposed of Bijou in the stable. There were five or six persons assembled in this kitchen; of these, three men were seated at a table in one of the windows playing at cards; and Mr. Pinchbold thought that a group of individuals thus occupied in broad daylight presented as unprepossessing an aspect as could well be imagined, and it also struck him that at

such a time the dirt of dirty cards was a more appalling form of pollution than any with which he had been previously acquainted. Besides the card-players, there were present in the room a couple of sewing wenches and a little skinny bustling woman of a scorbutic but cleanly appearance. The room looked rather bare and cheerless, in spite of a promising-looking cauldron which was steaming away on the fire. The most disconcerting thing connected with this scene was that no one seemed to take any notice of the arrival of the two Englishmen, a circumstance one would have thought that was calculated to electrify the whole assembly. But the card-players went on dealing, the servant girls went on working, and the little woman went on bustling almost as if there had been no addition to the party. Nay, even when Mr. Fudge had made it known that he and his friend were in want of something to eat and drink, nobody seemed to understand him, or if they understood him, to be disposed to meet his wishes: it was more as if the travellers had entered a private house and deranged an assembly of friends, than as if they had arrived at an inn where everybody was ready to serve them. In short, both Mr. Fudge and his friend felt like intruders.

There are few things, however, in this world that answer better than importunity, and Mr. Fudge, who knew this well enough, was not to be put down either by misunderstandings (and it was astonishing how little use his knowledge of the French language appeared to be on this occasion), nor was he to be daunted by a chilly reception. So he went on hammering away at his purpose till he got at any rate

the promise that a meal of some kind should be put before him and his companion, and with this assurance they were obliged for the present to rest contented.

And now the little bustling woman began to move about more briskly than ever, and the two servants, stimulated by her example, set themselves to work in good earnest. A huge coarse loaf was placed upon a bare table at the extremity of the kitchen opposite to that occupied by the card-players, and two or three pairs of knives and forks were placed here and there without the previous formality of laying the cloth. One or two labouring men coming in at this time seated themselves about the table, and the two strangers were beginning to think that they would be expected to take their meal in company with these worthies, when the little woman who seemed to be the landlady, and who had been absent for the last few minutes, came bustling up, and requesting them to follow her, led the way into an adjoining apartment.

Here they found, to their great delight, a cloth laid, though evidently not for their benefit only, as the round table on which it was placed was garnished with six knives, and forks to correspond. They were not long in discovering who were to be their companions at table, for simultaneously with the appearance of a great tureen of soup, which the landlady brought in and placed upon the table, there entered, first of all (to Mr. Pinchbold's great dismay), a genteel and not unembarrassed lady in black silk, and then a sturdy man of about two or three and forty, who seemed wonderfully at home with everybody, and who might or might not be the landlord, followed by a

tall and singularly prepossessing youth. A nondescript and cockney-looking personage, who might have been the black silk lady's husband or her brother, or who at any rate seemed well acquainted with her, entered last and shut the door behind him.

Now it was certainly rather trying for our two Englishmen to sit down with four perfect strangers who were all well acquainted with each other, and upon whom the presence of the two strangers must necessarily have acted as a restraint. There was no doubt that it did so. The conversation was carried on in rather a covert manner, the assembled acquaintances talking to each other in low tones like conspirators; and Mr. Fudge and his friend conversing with each other in that distant and commonplace manner which the most intimate friends, and even the nearest and most loving relatives, seem for some mysterious reason compelled to adopt when taking their food with the eyes of strangers upon them. The task of ladling out the soup and subsequently of carving devolved (in accordance with that rule which assigns this post invariably to the heaviest gentleman in company) upon the man who has been designated as having about him something of the aspect of the landlord. This man was something of a character; he was what the French call essentially a Farçeur. This word is so ill rendered by the English phrase, a joker, that for once in a way we will ask leave to retain the native expression. He was full of practical jokes—not always very funny, but always well received—the principal subject of them being the young man whom we have described above as being of a pleasant countenance. He was just the youth whom

any member of the Farçeur tribe would select for a victim, being evidently both extremely sensitive and also of a modest and retiring disposition. It must be mentioned, by the bye, that our Farçeur was perfectly good-natured in poking his fun, and that his practical jokes were of the simplest and most inoffensive kind. He would pretend to forget that he had already assisted his young friend to a plateful of victuals, and would, looking absently out of window as he did so, place another similarly filled upon the unconsumed contents of the first. He would then discover his mistake, with elaborate apology. He would take his neighbour's glass, and, draining its contents, would call attention to the quantity of wine which this ingenuous youth could get through; and then, taking an orange from a plate of fruit which stood in the middle of the table and putting it into the young man's plate, which was half full of soup, would urge him to try the effect of this combination of delicacies. These and the like pleasantries were kept up throughout the meal, and were so especially and irresistibly delightful in the eyes of the little bustling landlady, that when she came in with any fresh dish (for she did not partake of the meal herself) she would linger about the table in a perfect ecstasy of admiration, and would look from one to other of the guests with an expression which seemed to say, "Oh! what a man is this; was there ever such wit, such brilliancy, such fascination!"

The fascinator himself was evidently not unaware of the extent of his attractiveness in the eyes of the worthy little woman, and would make professions of exaggerated affection for her whenever she came into

the room, to her immense delight and amusement. It was evident enough to both our travellers before the meal was advanced far that he was not the landlord. It was not, however, so easy to say what he was as what he was not; he had evidently been a long time in his present quarters, and found them very comfortable ones. He would have been hard to please if he had not. The dinner was an excellent one, consisting of soup, a famous piece of bouilli, a roast fowl, a capital leg of mutton, lots of vegetables, and dessert, washed down with some very decent wine, some more than decent brandy, and a bottle of kirsch, which caused the eyes of Mr. Pinchbold to twinkle again, and unloosed his tongue to such an extent that he engaged in a brisk argument with the nondescript man who has been before mentioned as being perhaps the husband of the black silk lady—an argument which bore reference to the English game laws, and which originated in an assertion on the part of Nondescript that the English did not hunt the partridge, but only the hare. It was a marked characteristic in Mr. Pinchbold's manner of expressing himself in the French language that he could get on fluently enough up to a certain point, at which suddenly, and with no gradation of failure, it would happen to the unfortunate gentleman to be seized with a sudden paralysis, which left him altogether speechless,—the most certain means of producing such a stoppage being any indications of attentive listening on the part of those whom he addressed. In the present case, then, as long as a buzz of talk was going on, or the Farçeur was plying his jokes, Mr. Pinchbold did very well; but a pause suddenly taking place, and the company

betokening a slight interest in the argument that was going on, Mr. Pinchbold was suddenly seized with an inability to speak: it unfortunately happened, too, that having entered in refutation of what the nondescript man had advanced, he had undertaken to explain the English game laws. Mr. Pinchbold had just begun a sentence, by which he wished to convey to his opponent that the gentlemen of England lived upon their estates, when suddenly the seizure we have spoken of took possession of him just as he had reached the word "upon," whilst the French equivalent for estates refused to come to his aid.

"The gentlemen of England," said Mr. Pinchbold, "live in the winter season upon—upon—"

"Upon hares!" burst in his opponent. "That is just as I said. The partridge is unknown, and the Milords hunt the hare throughout the winter season."

Mr. Pinchbold turned very red, and stuttered and stammered a great deal, but it would not do; he could not get to the surface any more; and though Mr. Fudge, taking up the gauntlet, endeavoured in his turn to explain his companion's meaning, he did so to little purpose, the company either could not or would not understand, and the nondescript man was left in possession of the field.

One good result, however, was produced by this conversational failure on the part of Mr. Pinchbold. The ice was broken, and the restraint which the presence of the two Englishmen had seemed to impose on the company ceased to exist. The company now began to come out in their true colours, and the meal being at length over, seemed disposed to devote the afternoon to conviviality. The Farçeur became more

profuse in his facetious demonstrations than ever. There was a young pointer dog in the room belonging to him, and an attempt was made on the part of our humorist to induce this animal to perform a series of tricks, the animal being, according to his master's account, a highly trained one—an assertion, however, which the company were obliged to take upon trust, the pointer dog invariably creeping under the stick which he was intended to jump over, dropping down upon his fore-legs directly that the hand which raised him upon his hinder extremities was withdrawn, and steadfastly declining to hold a lump of sugar upon his nose till such time as his master should give him leave to eat it. The Farçeur, however, seemed perfectly satisfied with his dog's performance, and returning to table in better cue than ever, began once more to make violent love to the little landlady, a proceeding which, as the honest woman was never likely to see fifty again, she might be supposed to permit with perfect propriety. Indeed, the worthy lady appeared quite as ready to laugh at the Farçeur's mock heroics as any one else. He certainly had a good notion of keeping the company alive, and he was not long in hitting upon a new means of doing so. The young traveller, who has been before spoken of as the victim of our Farçeur's harmless jokes, was now put forward in a new light. Mr. Fudge had remarked that in one corner of the apartment in which they were dining there rested an old violin and its bow, and he had also observed that the young man, who had attracted his attention from the first, had, on entering the room, gone up to the place where this instrument stood, and taking it up tenderly,

as if he loved it, had touched a note or two and adjusted the strings with no unaccustomed hand. It appeared now that his power as a violinist were to be called into play. The Farçeur would take no denial, and both Mr. Fudge and his friend were urgent in requesting a specimen of the young traveller's abilities. It was curious and very pleasant to see how the unmistakeably genuine modesty of the youngster, who was evidently not a professional musician, struggled with his intense love of music, and how all sense of embarrassment became lost as he went on playing. He was no prodigy; he had taught himself a certain number of airs, which, for the rest, were well chosen, and played with an intensity of appreciation which made the performer so far forget his audience, as to indulge in certain physiognomical contortions of which he was evidently not the least aware, while now and then an expression of rapt enjoyment would pass over his features which made amends for any less picturesque distortions. Some passages from *Guillaume Tell,* the "Rendez moi ma patrie," and the "O ma tendre amie," from the delicious "Prè-aux Clercs," and certain morsels of Mozart, were among his collection of tunes. All seemed, curiously enough, tinged with an indescribable melancholy, not even excepting the strains of that sunniest and most light-hearted of composers, Mozart himself.

It was a curious scene—just such a one as our two travellers, but Mr. Fudge especially, would have dwelt on in imagination as characterized by that piquancy and novelty which they were journeying in search of. Here was, to begin with, this Farçeur. Who or

what was he? He was the kind of man who would be a good shot, who would understand the points of a horse, and whose opinion on the subject of cattle might be worth having. He would probably know how to drain a field, and would be able to tell you, if you were a railway company, and thought of running a branch to St. Hilaire, whether the operation would answer or not. Then there was this musical young man, travelling with his violin like Goldsmith with his flute. Evidently he was not out of his station, and yet there was something about him that seemed to separate him from the rest. Who was he? The cockney pair, again—the essentially townish man and the equally townish lady—what were they doing at this road-side inn? Lastly, if any one had been present to observe it, how additionally strange would the whole combination have appeared, owing to the presence of the two Englishmen, whom any one could have seen were men well versed in London life, who had probably never dined so near the kitchen in their lives before.

In such interesting company the time wore away pretty quickly. The Farçeur went on with his jokes. The landlady reached such a pitch of enthusiastic enjoyment of them, that she was fain at last to cry out, "Plus de farces," and to entreat that these exquisite pleasantries might cease before she expired with delight. The young man continued to fiddle in utter unconsciousness that the Farçeur had clapped the landlady's cap on the top of his head. Mr. Pinchbold, regardless of his recent failure, and true to his mission of explaining English institutions to the French nation, was engaged in trying to persuade

the company that half the English nation had enlisted as Volunteer soldiers, not only without being paid, but at considerable pecuniary loss to themselves. The cockney man—true denizen of a land where the conscription is not unknown — was maintaining flatly that the thing could not be. All these things were in full cry together, and Mr. Fudge was sitting quietly but delightedly noting the humour of the scene, when the confusion was suddenly augmented by a somewhat startling proceeding on the part of the genteel lady in the black silk dress, who, lashed into madness by the musical triumphs of the young violinist, and inspired with courage by numerous sips of kirsch, burst suddenly into a flood of uninvited and for some time unheard melody. It was that kind of flutey gurgling, however, which is sure, if persisted in long enough, to make its way through all obstacles, and as the black silk lady *did* persist long enough, she *did* make her way, and was left at last sitting with her chair pushed slightly back from the table, and her eyes fixed on the ceiling with that peculiar cataleptic stare which belongs to those who sing without accompaniment.

It was time to go. Mr. Fudge, in a covert aside to Mr. Pinchbold, expressed an opinion, founded on long observation, that it was all very pleasant and convivial now, and that it was better to depart before the next stage set in, which might very likely be a quarrelsome one. Upon hearing this, Mr. P. skipped off his seat with amazing alacrity; and in spite of many invitations to remain, the two Englishmen announced that the time had arrived when they must once more betake themselves to the road. So Bijou, who had

had now two or three hours' rest, was once more put between the shafts, and the two friends exchanging a cordial greeting with the Farçeur, and a warm shake of the hand with the young violinist, once more started on their journey, leaving the black silk lady, who had sung straight through all the preparations for their departure, in the culminating flourish of her forty-second stanza.

Of course the friends had plenty to talk about as they drove along, the lucky time they had hit upon for their arrival, the queer company they had stumbled upon, while they were not slow to congratulate themselves upon the mode of travelling they had selected, both gentlemen agreeing that they might have travelled by railway for half a dozen years without encountering a similar experience. Indeed there seemed only one thing that equalled the singularity of their recent entertainment, and that was its astounding cheapness; for when Mr. Fudge took the scrap of paper, which served as a bill, from his pocket, Mr. Pinchbold learnt, to his unbounded amazement, that their own most excellent dinner, together with the oats, hay, and straw, which Bijou had consumed, was represented by the ridiculous sum of 4 francs 13 sous; or 3*s*. 10½*d*. English.

Immediately after leaving St. Hilaire, the road by which their route lay branched off from the highway, this last making considerable circuit round by Lillers. It was a sort of April day, with occasional showers, which had made the road especially heavy; it would have been a bad one enough without this, being formed principally of loose stones about the size of the human head. Our travellers were, therefore,

bumped about finely enough; but neither bumpings nor showers had any effect upon the excellent spirits in which they both found themselves. The sun, too, would every now and then break out from among the clouds, and light up the little rounded hills and tufted woods, through which their road lay, in the most comfortable way conceivable. On they sped at a sober pace over hill and dale, by wood and meadow; now through a long and prosperous village, a great man's chateau, with a chapel in the grounds at the entrance to it; now through a little hamlet of half a dozen shabby huts; till at last, towards the close of the afternoon, they reached the little village of Pernes, at which they had determined to make a second halt. But, alas! before they had got so far, that short-lived possession, human happiness, had, in the case of both the friends, received a severe check. For the last few miles of the road unmistakeable signs of fatigue had manifested themselves on poor Bijou; and as they descended the hill into the village of Pernes, a most unequivocal limp became but too apparent.

This was a terrible termination to a hitherto delightful day. To have conceived an apprehension, to have dismissed it as ill-grounded, and then to have it reawakened,—to pass through this series of mental experiences is much more distressing than to have received an unpleasant truth as such from the beginning. It was through such an experience that Mr. Fudge and his friend had passed; their fears had been awakened, as the reader will remember, on the subject of Bijou's soundness, as they travelled to St. Omer; the fear had been dismissed as without foundation; and now it was forced back upon them with all the

strength of conviction—just, too, as Mr. Pinchbold said, piteously, "when they were enjoying themselves so much."

The fact is, that there really was some ground for considerable despondency on the part of both the travellers. The very foundation of all their hopes of completing the journey, begun with so much difficulty, lay altogether bound up in the bones and sinews of La Perle de Malaise; and here she was, on the second day of their expedition, showing unmistakeable signs of some great blemish in one of her limbs. Then, again, to consider the question of mere present inconvenience; here they were a good ten miles short of their resting-place for the night, with a lame horse unreasonably knocked up in consequence, doubtless, *of* that lameness; while, to make the matter worse, the afternoon was beginning to show unmistakeable signs that it was about to resign in favour of its successor, the evening. The only thing to be done was to try the effect of an hour's rest and a feed of corn.

The yard of the auberge at Pernes was a great dreary place, full of pigs, of dung-heaps, and liquid manure; and as there was something of a hill behind the house, there was a considerable incline from one end of the yard to the other. The auberge itself was such an unpalatable looking place, that Mr. Fudge and his companion preferred remaining among the pigs in the court-yard, or gloomily watching Bijou in the stable, where she was eating her oats, to accepting the landlady's invitation to enter the house. Both gentlemen were sadly out of spirits in consequence of Bijou's break-down. Mr. Pinchbold sat himself down

on the edge of a pigsty; while Mr. Fudge, too disconsolate even for companionship, retired to the interior of the carriole to secure a certain small strap which had given way in the course of the journey. Whilst he was thus engaged, one of those ridiculous incidents which occur so often at times when we are in anything but a humour to appreciate the comic, took place. It has been mentioned that the inn-yard was a large one, and that there was a considerable slope from one end of it to the other. The carriole had been left at the upper extremity of this slope, and Mr. Fudge was no sooner ensconced in its interior than it slowly began to move; it had no sooner got a start than the incline began to tell upon the pace; and Mr. Pinchbold, startled by the sound of wheels, and looking up, beheld the carriole, with his friend inside it, careering along the yard at the rate of six good miles an hour: it was supremely ridiculous. Mr. Fudge mechanically seized the reins, which were lying over the front of the vehicle, and forgetting that there was no horse in the shafts, called out, "Wo!" in a lusty voice. Mr. Pinchbold uttered loud cries for help, and rushed to the rescue, but finding nothing to take hold of, could only dance round the vehicle in impotent despair, feeling that if he attempted to arrest it in front it would run over him, while, if he grasped at the wheels behind (and there was nothing else to take hold of) he could expect nothing less than to have both his hands crushed in the attempt; so Mr. Pinchbold continued to call loudly for assistance: and the ostler and landlady hastening to the rescue, arrived just at the moment when the carriole having reached the bottom

of the slope, performed a majestic curve round the remaining portion of the yard, till having exhausted its impetus, and having met with a serious obstacle to progress in the shape of a large dunghill, it at last quietly settled down into a state of repose. Mr. Fudge descended from his position of peril; and Mr. Pinchbold receiving him with open arms, inquired, in a voice trembling with anxiety, whether he was much hurt.

The laughter produced by this absurd occurrence had the effect of somewhat raising the spirits of the two gentlemen. After about an hour of repose in the stable the unfortunate Bijou was once more brought out and put in harness. The day had by this time declined very considerably, and not more than an hour, if that, of faint and feeble light remained. As the travellers ascended the hill which leads out of the village of Pernes, it became apparent to them that the hour's rest, if it had not actually made Bijou worse, had certainly not made her better. She was evidently, in the language of the turf, "distressed," and the prospect of a ten-mile drive under such circumstances was anything but inviting. With longer experience in the art of conducting a horse through a long journey, Mr. Fudge got to know that there are few greater mistakes than the practice of dividing the day's work into more than two portions. All the time that can be spared for purposes of repose should be concentrated into the one midday rest, the duration of which in a *long* day's journey should not be less than four hours. It is astonishing how much more easily a horse will do his work with one such rest as this, than with two of two hours each.

Had the wretched little inn which they had just left been only one degree less squalid and unattractive, Mr. Fudge and his friend would certainly have turned back and passed the night there; but the place was so wretched, and above all so dirty, that they both, and Mr. Pinchbold especially, felt the strongest repugnance to the idea of so doing.

"We must walk, then," said Mr. Fudge.

Both gentlemen now got down and set themselves to the task of a long walk, determining that if necessary they would even rather proceed to St. Pol on foot, leaving Bijou only the weight of the carriole to draw, than go back and pass the night at Pernes. The walk in itself, and apart from the recollection of Bijou's impaired condition, would have been pleasant enough. The evening sights and sounds which struck upon their senses as they passed along, were not inferior in attraction to those which on the morning of this long day had yielded them so much delight. But how was it possible to enjoy anything much with that poor beast walking along beside them and giving such unmistakeable evidence of her unfitness for the journey. There was something so affecting, too, about her docility, something so infinitely deplorable in the thought that the handsome creature whose white form showed to such advantage in the twilight was in all probability, owing to some blemish the extent of which they could not yet know, a spoilt and valueless animal. The day declined, the glow of the setting sun gave place to twilight, and the twilight to darkness, and still they trudged along, presenting such a wonderful contrast to what they were that very morning, that it was hardly possible to believe t

the same people could have become so different in less than twelve short hours. There seemed no end to this part of their journey. Sometimes with a desperate hope of shortening it, they would get into their vehicle and endeavour for a little while to mend their pace, but these attempts were of little use, and they soon ended in being obliged to have recourse once more to their legs. Everything around them seemed to have altered in character; their way, as well as they could see, seemed to lie over waste and barren places, and from time to time they would be involuntarily startled by the semblance of a human figure with outstretched arms raised between them and the cold grey sky, nor would they be much relieved to find that it was but one of those terrible life-sized crucifixes which the ferocious piety, or rather superstition, of northern France has erected along the margins of these deserted roads.

It was nine o'clock at night, and more than three hours after they had left Pernes, that they found themselves entering the dark streets of St. Pol. The landlord of the Hotel d'Angleterre, at St. Pol, was a young man, which no landlord has a right to be; he wore steel spectacles, which no landlord has a right to do; he had the aspect of a medical student, which no landlord has a right to have; and he looked on with his hands in his pockets and whistled, while the travellers got down their own luggage and lifted about their own boxes, in a manner in which no landlord has a right to look on and whistle. Nothing can be more disconcerting on the part of an innkeeper than such behaviour, unless it is the manifesting of a certain indifference as to whether you come into his hotel

or not, and any uncertainty of speech in connexion with the grand question of suppers and bedrooms. The landlord of the inn at St. Pol having offended them in all the particulars which we have thus hinted at, our two Englishmen entered the *salle à manger*, having first seen to the comforts of Bijou, in rather a disconsolate frame of mind.

"Good evening, gentlemen; you have just arrived? How did you come? The diligence has been in some hours; have you come from Arras, from Bethune, from Doullens, where, in short, have you come from?"

Now, to be greeted the moment you are inside the door of a strange *salle à manger*, arriving dead tired, exhausted with hunger, blinking out of the darkness, with such a volley of questions as this would be disconcerting enough in itself, even supposing the inquiries to have emanated from a person of prepossessing or even of an ordinary appearance. But when this rude assault is immediately connected with an apparition of the biggest, the ugliest, the most villanous, the bonyest, the most muscular, the largest headed, the largest mouthed, the hugest nosed, the protrudingest eyed, the dirtiest handed, and altogether the most appalling priest ever beheld by mortal eyes, then, indeed, is the situation one calculated to make the strongest set of nerves quake, whilst the effect upon those of a weaker type is something that the mind shrinks from contemplating.

When Mr. Pinchbold beheld the apparition which we have described, he shrunk back, and left Mr. Fudge to meet the first shock of the encounter with the priest. He was seated in the very middle of a low bare table, apparently waiting for his supper, solac

himself in its absence with huge lumps of bread. But not the hugest lump that he could put into his mouth was able to arrest for one moment the flood of questions which issued from it. He invariably spoke with his mouth full, and as his tongue was too large even for his mouth, and his voice was a very loud one, it may be imagined that the effect was not pleasing. Everything this fearful man did was done violently, and as if he had far more of the vital element in him than he knew what to do with. He eat violently, he breathed violently, he spat violently, he pushed back his skull-cap from a low retreating forehead, and scratched his head violently, he stared violently. He was so alive, so huge, so goggle-eyed, and his long black cassock covered so gigantic a frame, that he seemed, as Mr. Pinchbold gazed in horror upon him, to expand and fill the whole apartment.

We have seen that this tremendous personage was down upon our travellers the moment they entered the room, but when they had reached the table and sat down opposite him, which they were obliged to do, as there was only one lamp and that hung immediately over the priest's head—when they were thus encamped opposite to him, his questions came thick and fast indeed. The worst of it was, that when Mr. Pinchbold became the object, as not unfrequently happened, of these questionings, such was his panic-stricken condition, that he could not articulate one single word, so that Mr. Fudge had not only to answer for himself, but for his friend; a position which would have been sufficiently embarrassing, even Mr. Pinchbold had not kept on continually nudging under the table, entreating him in their native

tongue to mind what he was about, as he felt certain that the priest was a spy, who would betray them in some way or other into the hands of government.

"You are travellers, gentlemen; where do you come from? From St. Omer's, eh? And before that? From Calais—really. But how did you travel—there is no public vehicle at this hour? Oh! in your own carriage, and with your own horse. That must be an expensive way of travelling; but you are rich?"

"By no means; quite the contrary."

"Oh, yes, you are; all the English are rich. Only the Irish are poor. They suffer and remain in poverty because they are faithful. Are you cold?"

"No; not particularly."

"Is that gentleman cold?" pointing to Mr. Pinchbold; "his teeth are chattering. He is cold. He is younger than you are, is he not? To look at him, one would not give him more than twenty-six or twenty-seven years. Do you always travel together?"

"Not always."

"And this carriage, did you bring it over from England with you? No? But the horse, doubtless?"

"No, neither horse nor carriage."

"You have travelled in France before?"

"Yes."

"You have been at Paris, at Boulogne, at Lyons, at Dijon, no doubt?"

"No doubt."

"Have you been at Amiens, for instance?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And this gentleman—has he also visited all these places?"

"He has visited some; but, to the best of my

belief, not all of them. You have never been at Dijon, have you?" said Mr. Fudge, addressing the last sentence to Mr. Pinchbold in their native tongue.

"Yes—no; I don't know—never mind—don't tell him."

"Your friend does not speak French?" asked the priest again.

"Yes; he speaks the language just as badly as I do. Come, his name is Pinchbold, and my name is Fudge, and we are both English, and we are travelling through France, and we have our own horse and our own carriole, because we want to see the country and to study its inhabitants, and to satisfy ourselves whether the rumours which have reached our metropolis, attributing to the French priesthood the custom of asking incessant questions, is founded on fact; and so now you know all about it."

The priest continued his questions, nothing daunted by Mr. Fudge's last remark. "Was Mr. Pinchbold travelling with the same views? Was he married? Was Mr. Fudge married? Had Mr. Fudge any brothers or sisters? Were any of his brothers or sisters married? Oh! his sister was married. What was the profession of the gentleman who had married Mr. Fudge's sister? And Mr. Pinchbold, had he any brothers or sisters? Had he any aunts or uncles? Oh, he had an uncle by the mother's side, had he? Was Mr. Pinchbold's uncle by the mother's side married? Had Mr. Pinchbold's uncle by the mother's side any offspring?"

At this point in the proceedings, the supper making its appearance, the attention of the worthy divine became so utterly absorbed in the contemplation of

an attack upon it, that beyond a final inquiry whether they meant to eat any bread, coupled with an assertion that he knew that the English never did eat any bread with their meals—beyond this, the travellers were at length left to themselves, and allowed to occupy themselves with eating their own suppers, or watching the priest of St. Pol as he flung himself upon his.

But if the priest was horrible to behold when merely engaged in stanching his appetite with occasional morsels of bread, what was he now, that having crossed himself on his wicked old breast, he set himself in earnest to work at the viands which were placed before him? Such a noisy eater was this priest; such a devourer, with his eyes, of the dish that was to follow that which he was engaged upon,—such a lapper-up of soup, such a whistling chewer of tough bouilli, such a tearer of the underdone flesh of cold gigot, such a cruncher of the bones of young chickens, that all appetite forsook our travellers at sight of him, and they were not long in finding an excuse for abandoning the salle à manger; leaving their terrific tormentor still at work with a stream of omelette aux fines herbes running out of each corner of his mouth.

"What a priest!" said Mr. Fudge, as soon as they had got outside the door.

"He will execute some hideous vengeance," said Pinchbold, gloomily. "I observed his expression when you made that rash speech about the priests, and it was horrible to behold."

"I could not help it," said Mr. Fudge; "his curiosity was so impertinent."

"Not a wink of sleep for me to-night," said Mr. Pinchbold. "By the bye, Fudge, we never got a pistol, after all; and in these French inns there is not so much as a poker or a boot-jack to use as a weapon."

There was no banishing the idea of that priest; and Mr. Pinchbold felt so convinced that he would knock at the door to ask for medicine to cure that indigestion which his supper might be expected to engender, that he borrowed one of the fire-dogs from Mr. Fudge's room to keep by him as a means of defence on the event of such an apparition.

Mr. Pinchbold describes his apartment as a vast bare-looking room, so white-washy and unfurnished, that it looked like a ward in a hospital. He mentions that there were two beds in it, his own and another not made; that there was a large deal table with a small washhand-basin on it, two chairs, and a lively engraving hung on the wall representing six human beings in a caldron full of flames praying to St. Pol himself for deliverance, the saint looking on with an air of some indifference from a place of security, but not of comfort, inasmuch as he is represented sitting on a marble chimney-piece which is supported by clouds, and has his legs dangling in the air. Mr. Pinchbold further remarks, that his apartment is so dimly lighted that he fancies he sees the priest hovering in its dark corners, that he also confidently expects his black legs to appear down the chimney, his vile head to emerge from under the beds, or his whole body to burst the limits of a certain chest of drawers which would not open, and to appear, bloated and supper-swollen, charged with a thousand additional questions which

he had forgotten to ask before. Mr. P. also remarks in an entry—*which is, however, dated the next morning* —that he felt animated with a lion's heart; and that, armed with the fire-dog which he had by his bedside, he felt himself equal to the encounter of any number of priests, swollen or otherwise.

CHAPTER VII.

SHOWING HOW THE TRAVELLERS SET OFF FOR THE HOSTELRY OF THE QUATRE FILS D'AYMON, AND HOW THEY MADE TEA ON THE ROAD, TRIUMPHING ALTOGETHER OVER THE OPPOSITION OF THE ELEMENTS.

Beyond a sound compounded in about equal parts of a shriek, a groan, and a snore, kept up with monotonous regularity throughout the whole night, and obviously emanating from the mouth and nose of the inquisitive priest, the travellers may be said to have enjoyed throughout the night a joyful immunity from any further persecution at his hands. When they descended to breakfast the next morning, he was nowhere to be seen; but though Mr. Fudge was disposed simply to congratulate himself on this circumstance, Mr. Pinchbold took a less hopeful view of the case, and construed his absence into an expedition which should in some way or other betray them into the hands of Government—a fear continually agitating that gentleman's breast; though what Government was to do with them when it had got them, or why if it wanted them it could not take them without anybody to betray them at all, it would have been difficult to say.

The fact was, that the priest had gone to assist at a certain ceremony, concerning which the whole

population of St. Pol was more or less in a state of excitement. There was a wedding going on that morning, and as the parties to this ceremony were what the landlady of the inn called "des gens comme il faut," the event was a great one, and made a corresponding sensation. This way of describing people, by the bye, as "comme il faut," is, considering the qualifications necessary to deserve this glorious title, rather indicative of an appreciation of great pecuniary than great moral pre-eminence on the part of the French nation; the "people such as they ought to be," which is the literal translation of the phrase, being by no means persons of great excellence of life, or distinguished by the possession of all the cardinal virtues, but simply such as were endowed with a pretty fortune, and set a good example to their neighbours in all matters connected with the appointments of their household or the arrangement of their toilette. Our two travellers, however, esteemed themselves lucky in catching a glimpse of these "gens comme il faut" at a later period of the day, when they were once more seated in the carriole, and engaged in the prosecution of their journey.

The inn at St. Pol was by no means a bad one, and had not our travellers been rash enough to ask for tea at breakfast, they might have carried away a tolerable impression of the house. (There was, by the bye, according to the testimony of both gentlemen, a peculiar kind of *speckled* bug in the beds at this hotel, endowed with mysterious powers of eluding the human grasp, which neither Mr. Fudge nor his friend had ever met with before—the attention of entomologists is invited.) But the tea! In the first

place, there is something discouraging about a large square china teapot; depend upon it, no good ever comes of such a vessel. It was filled with a liquid, the exact counterpart of which may at any time be produced by pouring two quarts of tepid water on half a handful of chopped hay, adding a *soupçon* of tallow and one black currant.

It so happened that on the particular morning with which we are concerned, both our Englishmen were consumed with that burning desire for a cup of tea which only that beverage can awaken, and which no other liquid whatsoever can assuage. It certainly was not to be assuaged by the composition which we have just described, and so it ended in a determination, arrived at simultaneously by both gentlemen, that, by hook or by crook, they would attempt the tremendous achievement of preparing, somehow or other, a cup of tea with their own hands, and that this attempt should be made before the day was many hours older. But how many things did they require in order to effect this purpose? It was true that they had brought with them from Calais an Etna, a wicker bottle of spirits of wine, and a canister of tea; but there were many more necessaries to be obtained before they could hope to obtain the result they so ardently desired. They had a short drive only before them; for, in consideration of Bijou's lameness and fatigue, they had determined that their next resting-place should be at Doullens—a small town about half-way between St. Pol and Amiens, and somewhere about twenty miles from each. This distance the travellers had resolved to perform without stopping *en route*, as they could by that means remain longer

at St. Pol, and so prolong for Bijou's sake the rest of the night and morning. The two Englishmen had therefore plenty of time to go out and procure such things as they stood in need of for their contemplated tea-making. They could bestow a glance on the town itself at the same time.

But if it was their intention as they walked along to bestow a glance upon the town, it certainly was the intention of the town—as represented by its inhabitants—to bestow a glance upon *them*. There never were such starers as the St. Polians. Far out of the way of everything, removed at an immense distance from any railway, this deserted place is rarely visited by strangers, even of French birth; while the occasions on which the pavements of this little town have been darkened by English shadows must have been rare indeed. A deserted place, not old enough to be picturesque—a main street, to which the same description applies, were enough in their utter dreariness to send our travellers back to their Hotel, even if they had not really been stared completely out of countenance into the bargain. Shopkeepers would come out of their shops to stare at them, and would "step next door" after they had passed, to compare notes with their neighbours on the subject of the strangers. Pedestrians would hurry on to get a good place in front, from which to observe them as they approached, or would call at the houses of friends to warn them not to lose this chance, but to run to their windows. Altogether they were glad enough when their purchases were made, and the more so that a crowd was assembled round the door of every shop they went into to watch their proceedings within,

and to devour them, ocularly speaking, as they came out. It must be acknowledged that some of this staring was attributable to the demoralized condition of the populace consequent on the wedding of the "gens comme il faut." The public had turned out as one man to see the procession of vehicles which carried the bridal party to church, and were now eager for some excitement to while away the time till the ceremony was over and the return procession formed. Altogether, then, it was a bad time for the Englishmen to have chosen for their sortie, and they were not sorry when, with pockets distended by their recent purchases, they found themselves once more within the shadow of the inn walls.

They had indeed encouraged local trade quite on a large scale. They had bought a pound of white sugar, a tin can, with a lid, to hold milk, two china mugs to drink out of, a long stone bottle for water, and a large covered basket to hold it all, with room enough in it besides for the Etna, the spirits of wine bottle, and the tea-canister. Later on in their journey, and after the inestimable value of their tea-equipage had been frequently proved, a second wicker bottle full of spirits of wine was added, in order that there might always be one full and one in use—an indispensable arrangement this, as spirits of wine is not always to be got, and to run short of it at a moment, of tea-appetite is to experience one of the most fearful sensations known to man. Another improvement, too, which our intrepid travellers subsequently made in their system was the substitution of a third wicker bottle for milk in place of the can, as it is easier to carry such a vessel about, because it is flat, and lies

snug and unsuspected in a coat-pocket. A tin funnel to convey the milk into the bottle's narrow mouth must also be provided. Here, then, is a list of the things required for making up a tea-basket—an institution without which no English traveller should travel, if he intends exploring the less frequented parts of the Continent. It must be mentioned, however, that the stone bottle to hold water is not needed in general, and that it was only because our travellers contemplated a pic-nic tea by the roadside that they were under the necessity of providing one. The tea-basket, then, of the ordinary traveller need only contain:—a metal teapot (not silver); a tea-caddy; a wicker bottle for milk, and a tin funnel to fit into the neck of the bottle; *two* additional wicker bottles for spirits of wine; a tin can for sugar, and as many common earthenware mugs—they cost only a few sous apiece—as there are persons in the travelling party. The writer is much mistaken if those who adopt this idea of the tea-basket will not be grateful for the hint. They will get in time quite to love it and all that it contains, from remembering how it has ministered to their comfort, and they will lay it up in ordinary when they get back to England as a thing to be kept apart, sacred to the remembrance of their journey.

Mr. Fudge having gone through the disagreeable process of greasing the wheels of the carriole, an achievement which it was necessary for him to perform every two days, and which was in this case carried out under the eye of the landlord, who stood looking on and whistling all the time it was going on—Mr. Fudge having completed this operation, and

having stowed away all the luggage, as usual, in the back of the carriole, the landlord whistling more than ever, all things were pronounced ready for the start; and the travellers, after learning that the inn at which they were to stop for the night, at Doullens, went by the romantic name of the "Quatre Fils d'Aymon," got once more under weigh, at about noon, intending, as Bijou had received her midday feed before starting, to travel very leisurely and spend the day upon the road.

"We must get her to Amiens, if possible," said Mr. Fudge, speaking of the mare, "travelling very slowly, and, once arrived at that town, we must take advice about her. I much fear this lameness is a serious affair, and that its cure will take up more time than we have to give."

As our Englishmen ascended the hill which leads out of the town of St. Pol, they saw before them, also ascending the hill, what appeared to be a procession, so numerous was the concourse of gentlemen and ladies who were walking slowly and solemnly up the rising ground in front of them. The procession was divided into two parties, the gentlemen being all together in one, and the ladies in the other. Neither ladies nor gentlemen had any covering on their heads. As the men were all dressed in black from head to foot, being clothed in full evening costume—as they kept all in a little cluster together, forming one black mass, and moving very slowly towards the brow of the hill—Mr. Fudge could not help thinking that they bore some resemblance to a funeral party without a body, going slowly in search of it.

The party, however, which our friends were now

graduallyapproaching, was not assembled together on any mournful occasion, though its members were silent and solemn enough to have justified the idea.

"It is the wedding!" cried Mr. Pinchbold, suddenly struck with an idea; and he was right. The "gens comme il faut" were, in the interval between the ceremony which was just over and the meal which it may be supposed was not ready, amusing themselves with that harmless recreation, a walk, and the giver of the feast having no garden capable of holding so large an assembly, the company was obliging enough to put up with the high road as a substitute. The fact is, that they were nothing loth to show themselves; the bride and bridegroom, who were among the pedestrians, having none of that desire to hide themselves from all human scrutiny which seems to affect, to an extent almost morbid in its excess, the recently married in our own country. The bride in this case was quite as ready to show herself off in her white costume as the bridegroom in his black, and both looked proudly round as the carriole approached, that those whom it contained might have an opportunity of seeing them to the best advantage.

"And we poor exiles," said Mr. Pinchbold, as they drove on, and watching the wedding party through the little pane of glass at the back of the carriage as he spoke—"and we poor exiles are wandering thus away from home and kindred, forming no social ties, much less any of a more tender kind. 'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, sl w,' we wander on far from our native land in the idst of dangers and privations. When I see sucl a scene as this," continued

Mr. P., abandoning his look-out, which, in consequence of its small circumference and the jolting of the vehicle, did not enable him to see much,—"when I look on such a scene as this, I feel indeed what it is to be an outcast, and to have one's dark and cheerless lot cast upon a foreign soil."

Mr. Pinchbold, who was of a susceptible nature, and singularly sensible to the attacks of the tender passion, was accustomed to bemoan himself thus occasionally. He soon rallied, however, and the moment having arrived when the friends considered that they were far enough away from the town to commence their contemplated tea-making operations, the little gentleman set himself to work to perform his part in this most important proceeding with an energy and determination which did not savour much of the blighted outcast he had professed himself to be.

The place chosen by the two friends for their first experiment in wayside tea-making was as charming a spot for the purpose as could well be imagined. In a little valley at the bottom of a long hill which they had just descended, and with another in front which they would by-and-by have to mount, our travellers pulled up, and turning aside to a spot where some turf grew by the roadside, and where there was a pleasant shade of trees overhead, they drew the carriole up in the shadiest place they could find—for it was a very hot day—and began their preparations. And here it was that one of the invaluable characteristics of Bijou, which fitted her so pre-eminently for a journey of this whimsical kind, was made very apparent. She would stand still. The flies were buzzing about her and annoying her sadly all the

time, and would have driven any other horse into a state of frenzy; but there she stood, merely protesting now and then against her tormentors with an occasional stamp, but making no attempt to move on or to turn away to one side or the other.

And now the tea-making began in earnest. Mr. Pinchbold had, after many fruitless attempts, been successful in procuring at a certain small village which they had passed through, a supply of milk which completely filled the tin can. He had sat balancing this vessel as well as he could during the drive that ensued, but he was now, in spite of his efforts, completely covered with white splashes, which gave him something of the appearance of a whitewasher who had been touching up a ceiling in his Sunday clothes. There was plenty of milk, however, left in the can, and so it was carefully set aside in a place by itself, ready for the crisis. It was a sight to behold the workmanlike manner in which Mr. Fudge went to work at the tea-making. First of all he established the Etna in a flat place; and a very difficult thing he found it to discover a dead level suited to his purpose. It was found at last, though, after a good many tiltings and upsettings and dilutings of the spirits of wine in the tin saucer of the Etna with water which was jogged over from the interior of the vessel. A level place was found at last, and the Etna was established upon it, and a new supply of spirits of wine being added, there really seemed, if it would but ignite, that there was some hope of ultimate success. The next difficulty was to get a light. One of the most mysterious things with which the writer of this narrative is acquainted is the strong antagonism between

sunlight and lucifer-matches. It is unaccountable enough that there should exist any sort of jealousy on the part of so mighty a luminary as the sun towards so paltry a firework as a lucifer, but certain it is that he will not hear of one. It is almost impossible to light one in his presence, and when it is at last kindled, ten to one it goes out again directly. Then how unmistakeably is any attempt to "strike a light" the signal for the development of hitherto concealed breezes. There exists not that day which is so sultry as to be without a puff ready for a semi-ignited lucifer. Before you attempt to kindle the match, and for many hours afterwards, all is still, but once take your box with the roughened lid in hand, and lo! a light zephyr instantly starts up and plays around you in such fitful and inconsistent wise, too, that turn and twist about as you will, there is no eluding it.

At length, by getting into the interior of the carriole, and retiring to its innermost recesses, Mr. Fudge did at length manage—assisted by Mr. Pinchbold, who held a hat exactly where it most impeded his friend's movements—to obtain the wished-for light; and as Mr. P. had several pieces of paper ready to ignite, the friends did at length manage to bring one of them in contact with the spirits of wine in the Etna's saucer, and so at last they had the delight of seeing a thin and filmy flame like blue gauze envelop the vessel which held their water, flickering around it in a sheet of lambent blue fire which it was very pretty to see.

It were long to tell of the eagerness with which this flame was watched, of the way in which Mr. Fudge

listened one minute after it had been ignited to hear if there was any sound of bubbling, of the disastrous clumsiness of Mr. Pinchbold, who striving to get the lid of the Etna off in order to see if the water was boiling, did at last remove it, it is true, but with a jerk which discharged so large a portion of the blazing spirits of wine over the floor of the carriole, that if Mr. Fudge had not been by, with the flask in his hand, what remained must infallibly have gone out, when all must have been begun again.

It was surely a great moment when the first bubbles began to appear on the surface of the water; and Mr. Fudge, standing with the Etna in one hand, and the open teapot in the other, and leaning forward to avoid splashes, gave the word for Mr. Pinchbold, who was waiting by his side in a breathless condition of excitement, to whisk off the top of the Etna, and, at the same time, to blow out the flame which was still blazing in the saucer. It was surely, too, a great sight to behold Mr. Fudge, when, at the moment of the performance of these manœuvres by his friend, he discharged the clear boiling liquid in a crystal stream, which descending into the secret heart of the teapot, was there lost sight of, never to appear again as water, but to be seen next in the form of amber-coloured tea. The excitement of Mr. Pinchbold, now that the tea was made, was so great, and his desire to try it so premature, that Mr. Fudge was obliged to take him by the arm, and walk him up and down at a distance from the carriole, something after the mode adopted by the friends of those who have unconsciously swallowed an overdose of laudanum.

At length it was discovered, by reference to Mr.

Fudge's watch, that the tea had stood exactly seven minutes, which being the time allotted by discreet persons for the bringing to perfection of this delightful beverage, was thought by both our friends a sufficient period of delay. And now the proud moment had arrived when the tea was actually a *fait accompli*, and when there was nothing more to be done but to drink it. Of course, Mr. Pinchbold's first act was to scald his mouth severely, and thereby to deprive himself of the organ of taste for many days to come; a misfortune, however, which did not prevent the worthy gentleman from asserting that such a cup of tea as that he defied China itself to produce; and that those who would really know what tea was like must make it with an Etna by the side of the road, and drink it with the sky above their heads, and the green fields around them.

And truly that meal—if a cup of tea may be so called—partaken of by the two friends, was a more enjoyable feast than many on which sovereigns have been laid out, where this had cost sous. There is something about a meal, whether on a large or small scale, besides mere eating and drinking; something besides good food and drink, and even something besides appetite is required for its enjoyment. To begin with, there must be peace between those who share it. There is a strange linking together of the hearts of those who eat and drink together; the act of eating and drinking being altogether mixed up with this sensation, and necessary to it. The same group of friends assembled round the same table, with nothing on it, would never feel so cordially towards each other as they do when partaking of the same

dish. How completely, too, is this proved by considering the reverse of the case. When is any "unpleasantness" felt to be so distressing as at meal-times? When is the presence of one whom we dislike felt to be so oppressive and disturbing?

So the meal partaken of by our two travellers was to each of them in every way delightful. The silence and the solitude of the place was complete and utter; no sound but the singing of the birds and the chirping of the grasshopper was audible; no living thing was to be seen but a few cattle grazing at a distance, and the companion of their journey, the unfortunate, but docile Bijou. Unhappily, here lay the stumbling-block to their full enjoyment; here was the inevitable bitter ingredient, the one defect in the scheme of a journey otherwise so completely enjoyable. There was now no doubt about her lameness, no doubt that it was a confirmed and serious disease, no doubt that she was unfitted for their journey, and but little—though this they could not know yet—that her restoration to health, if possible, could involve a greater sacrifice of time than it would be possible for the two travellers to make. It has been said elsewhere that Mr. Fudge was an economist, and it has been hinted that neither he nor his friend were in the possession of much wealth; but it is only justice to both of them to say that the certainty of the loss of money which must ensue, owing to the unsoundness of the animal, which was their joint property, had little share, if any, in the distress which that unsoundness caused them. What they felt was the loss of Bijou herself, of the horse by whose aid the journey had been commenced, the loss of a faithful ally, to whom, because she was

so good and docile, they had both got to be much attached.

From the time when the tea-equipage was once again consigned to its basket, and the carriole was once more set in motion, there occurred little worthy of record till when, late in the afternoon, they arrived at Doullens. It was true that Mr. Pinchbold experienced a considerable panic, at one moment, from the sight of a figure in the garb of a *priest*, which they saw walking along in front of them, and which Mr. P. took it into his head was no other than the dreaded priest of St. Pol; but it proved to be quite another person when they overtook him, one of those country curates who reside in the villages of France, and who do a world of good, and win a vast deal of love from the flocks who are under their care. This priest was quite a simple-looking personage, and pulled his broad-brimmed hat quite off his head to the two Englishmen as they passed him, a salute which they were not slow to return.

There is no one who has not engaged in a journey in some sort akin to that on which our two Englishmen had entered, who can fully sympathize with the eager curiosity with which they regarded the entry of a new town, or, still more, the anxiety with which they scrutinized the outside of the inn at which they were to put up for the night. The exterior of the "Quatre Fils d'Aymon," was certainly not in its favour. It stood in a row of shabby houses, and looked itself the shabbiest, and, what was worse, the dirtiest of them all. They had, however, been recommended here, and if they sought some other inn they might fare worse. So, after some slight misgiving, they drove

through the narrow gateway that gave access to the dirtiest and most piggish yard that ever was seen; Mr. Pinchbold making the customary remark, as they passed within the shadow of the walls, that he "felt a presentiment that they would have their throats cut."

The hostelry of the Four Sons of Aymon, was certainly the most debased which our travellers had yet had to do with. The entrance to the inn was by the kitchen, and when once you found yourself in this apartment, you felt some doubt as to where you were to go next, till perceiving at last a small door in one corner of the room, you pushed it open at a venture, and found yourself in a little dark sort of parlour with a window which gave a view of the stable-yard, and admitted, though it had never been opened since it was constructed, a powerful flavour of manure. This was the salle-à-manger, and here, at half-past six, the dinner was served, and those persons who happened to be in the house at the time, sat down together to partake of it. It was at this meal that our two friends were first brought in contact with a class, of which subsequently they were destined to see a great deal—the commis-voyageurs, or commercial travellers of France. Indeed, in the more out-of-the-way parts of France, the inns seem altogether supported by these gentry, and they are consequently able to take quite a high tone with the subordinates, and to lord it over them grandly enough. There were two specimens of this tribe at present lodged at the Quatre-Fils d'Aymon, both, to judge from their physiognomies, being of the Hebrew persuasion, and both very polite, very familiar, very happy, and very boastful, and very much inclined to talk *at* our two travellers. The landlord himself,

a dismal, oldish, taciturn man, whom Mr. Pinchbold pronounced to have a very dangerous aspect, was the only other person at table, and proved a wet-blanket of the most swampy description. On his removal, however, the tongues of the Jewish gentlemen were unloosed, and beginning with a systematic attack on the dinner, of which they had just partaken voraciously, they went on to other matters, and chatted away glibly enough.

"Peastly soup," said the elder and principal man of the two — there seems always a chief and a subordinate when two friends are seen by a stranger in company. "Peastly soup," he remarked again, if we may be allowed to paraphrase his conversation and that of his friend as a liberal translation of the French original.

"Peastly dinner altogether," was the friend's answer, helping himself to a peculiar kind of sponge-cake, which forms the staple commodity of the inn-desserts all over France.

"Peastly wine, too," continued the first speaker, taking up a tumbler quite full of the beverage in question and setting it down empty.

"Never get good vine at these country inns," said No. 2.

"Good vine at the Hotel du Rhin, at Amiens," remarked No. 1, again.

"Make you pay for it, too, don't they?" said his friend; "He, he, he!"

"Ah," replied the first speaker, holding his glass up to the light, "Paris is the place for vinsh—remember that dinner M. St. Lazare gave ush at the 'Trois Frères?' My gootness, vot a dinner!"

"How much do you think it cost, now?" asked the other.

"Hundred and fifty francs, if it cost a centime."

"No, no, not so much as that."

"Vot do you mean? St. Lazare don't mind money. Look at the truffles, the champagne, the burgundy. Hundred and fifty, depend upon it."

"How do you like the 'Trois Frères?'" asked the inferior Hebrew.

"Oh, pretty well—not so good as Philippe's."

"Done much business here to-day?" inquired the satellite, changing the subject abruptly.

"Not much; business very dull everywhere," said No. 1.

"Been up there?" asked the friend, indicating some route known commercially to his ally, by a jerk of the thumb.

"Up where?" inquired the other, irritably.

"Oh, you know."

"Oh yes—and I'll just tell you what I said—I said there had been nothing doing now for the last three times I'd been round this way, and that if there wasn't something—and something handsome too—next time, I'd never go that way again."

[redacted] was the kind of conversation to which our two friends were made privy. It will, though only a small specimen of a dialogue that lasted for a considerable period, serve to convey one important fact to the reader, namely, that the tribe known by the name of "gent," is not unrepresented on the other side of the Channel. Mr. Pinchbold, who, as he mentioned to his companion, was always anxious to make friends in the house, in case of a night attack on the part of the innkeeper,

found this quite a difficult dialogue to join in. He managed, however, about this time to take advantage of an allusion to the recently concluded Treaty of Commerce, and was out of his depth in no time.

The two Jewish gentlemen were grandly patronising and kind in their expressions with regard to the benefits likely to accrue to England from this new arrangement. The English would now have an opportunity of tasting French wines for the first time, instead of living, as heretofore, on the sherry-vine, the Portoporto, and the viskey-gin, which were their sole drinks, rendered necessary, however, in a climate where sunshine and blue sky were two unknown things.

Mr. Fudge, remarking ironically that perhaps the Treaty concluded with France might lead to the importing into our benighted island of some amount of these two last-named advantages, rose to leave the table; and so this interesting conversation came to an end.

There was not much worthy of note in the town of Doullens. A great heap of fortifications was gathered together in a place by itself, on an eminence overhanging the town, looking as if it had retired to this spot to keep its eye upon the place, and Such in check. is

Mr. Pinchbold describes his bedroom at the Quatre Fils d'Aymon, as a sort of loft at the end of a long passage. He further states, that the loft was completely filled and choked up with lumber of every conceivable kind. The bed itself, being so much like the rest of the lumber, that it was only possible to know that it was placed there in any other capacity

because the extreme dampness of the sheets showed that they had only just been put on. The lumber, however, was very serviceable for purposes of barricade, which causes Mr. Pinchbold to remark that there is some good in almost everything. Mr. P. subjoins a sketch of the hot-water jug, from which it appears that it was very little larger than an extinguisher which happened to be placed in immediate contact with this vessel.

Neither Mr. Fudge or his companion were sorry to take leave of their surly host of Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon. It was a beautiful bright morning when they started, and as they drove across the bridge over the little rivulet that dances past the town, and under the walls of the fortress—which contains, by the bye, a prison for criminal women—they felt that but for Bijou's lameness they would be the happiest travellers that ever walked up a hill. The lameness of Bijou was now a confirmed thing, and so distressing, that it seemed almost doubtful whether they would be able to get her even to Amiens. The night's rest seemed rather to have developed than decreased the poor creature's malady.

There is no person but one who has sat for two or three consecutive days behind a lame horse, and that horse a white one, who can form any notion of the depressing effect of the spectacle presented to the eyes of the driver of such an animal. The reader will perhaps ask why a white lame horse is worse than a black lame horse? The answer to which is, that a pair of white ears bobbing up and down are more salient and conspicuous than a pair of dark ones. Those ears are the organs which the driver of

a lame horse is compelled, as by some horrible fascination, to watch. As for Mr. Fudge, he never took his eyes off those ears of Bijou's. The miserable dip of that left ear, as the fore foot on the same side came to the ground, absorbed his whole attention. It was impossible to look at anything else, or to think of anything else. The landscape, the people they met, the buildings by the wayside, were all seen through a medium of lame horse, which made everything look awry, ugly, and distorted. Nay, even when he was not driving, things were not much better. The day's occupation affected his repose, and those white ears bobbed up and down before him even when seated at dinner, or taking refuge in his bed at night. What an appearance, too, must they present to strangers; how contemptible must they look to those who met them on the road. Indifferent to the opinion of the world as a man may be on many subjects, he will scarcely be so with regard to the horse he is driving. Mr. Fudge was peculiarly sensitive on this subject. The praises which Bijou's beauty had won for her at the different places they had stopped at had given him the most unfeigned gratification, and he would now, at sight of any approaching vehicle, pull the mare up if she happened to be trotting, and walk her past it, for Bijou's infirmity only appeared when she trotted, and did not as yet show itself in her walk.

"Do you see that boy?" said Mr. Pinchbold, whose eyes had not been so exclusively occupied as his companion's.

"I see nothing," replied Mr. Fudge, "but Bijou's ears. I see, however, now you mention it, a boy running by the road-side; but what of that?"

There was, in fact, and had been now for some time, a boy running along by their side. He was a ragged little chap, whose costume appeared to consist of half a shirt—dirty—three-quarters of a pair of trousers and one brace, nothing on his feet, nothing on his head. The remarkable part about this boy was, that he seemed to have attached himself to the carriole. For some time he would run along by the side of it, then he would gallop madly ahead and look back. Then he would let them overtake him, and pass by him, when they would lose sight of him for some minutes. He would reappear, however, trotting along the footpath, and presently would again shoot forward and run on before them, not looking where he was going, but back over his shoulder into the interior of the carriole. The carriole would again overtake and pass him, and he would be again lost to sight.

"This is very horrible," said Mr. Pinchbold. "This," repeated that gentleman, "in the middle of the open country, and far removed from any human habitation, is very horrible."

"Why," said Mr. Fudge, "you are not afraid of the boy, surely?"

"No," answered Mr. Pinchbold, proudly; "but I am convinced that that boy represents some unseen agency bent upon our destruction."

"But what agency?" asked Mr. Fudge.

"I don't know," replied Mr. Pinchbold; "would that I did; but *some* hidden agency he represents."

The boy was now out of sight, for the hood of the carriole rendered invisible all objects but those in front of the travellers. Mr. Fudge had forgotten all

about the boy, and was gazing, as usual, at Bijou's ears, when Mr. Pinchbold once more demanded his attention.

"Fudge," said that gentleman, "would you mind stopping?"

"What for?" asked Mr. Fudge, rather hastily.

"I am convinced," said Mr. Pinchbold, "that that boy is doing some horrible thing to the carriole. I have looked through the pane of glass behind, and the window at the side, but I can see nothing of him, and therefore, very reluctantly, I must ask you to stop, that I may get down and look after him."

"Really, Pinchbold," said Mr. Fudge, somewhat irritably, "this is too much. A little twopenny-halfpenny boy like that to arrest us in our journey—the thing would be really too ridiculous. Come," he continued, "dismiss the boy altogether from your mind."

"My dear Fudge," said Mr. Pinchbold, solemnly, "the thing is impossible. I am persuaded that that boy is now engaged in loosening some screw at the back of the carriole, or in abstracting some linch-pin, or engaged in some other devilish mischief, that we shall repent of if we don't look after him."

Mr. Fudge could not help laughing at his friend's earnestness, but his momentary irritability was over, and he pulled the mare up without further entreaty.

Mr. Pinchbold descended from the vehicle with elaborate caution, and made the circuit of the carriole in a stealthy manner; then he looked underneath it, and finally, retiring to a short distance, he surveyed the top. All these varied forms of scrutiny having failed, he extended his researches to a somewhat

wider field, and, standing on the step of the carriole, surveyed the country around with a small telescope which was his constant companion. He was just returning this instrument to his pocket, when he became suddenly conscious once more of the presence of the youthful object of his anxiety. The boy was standing, with his hands in his pockets, gazing steadily up into a tree that grew by the road-side.

"Hallo, boy," shouted Mr. Pinchbold, speaking, however, in French.

The singular individual thus addressed did not utter a single word in reply, but set off at the top of his speed, running once more in the direction in which the travellers were going.

"Are you satisfied now, and may we go on?" asked Mr. Fudge, a little maliciously.

"We will go on by all means, Fudge, if you wish it, but I am very far from being satisfied," was Mr. Pinchbold's answer.

The carriole was once more put in motion, but it was not long before Mr. Pinchbold spoke again.

"Why, bless my life and soul," he said, "here are other boys, and the first boy is in communication with them."

It was true enough. There appeared to be stations along the road at which boys were picketted, and the bare-legged boy would run from one to another along this mysterious line, would hold a brief conference with each, and then hasten on to the next; the boy conferred with instantly leaving his post and galloping off as fast as his legs would carry him.

Now certainly all this was very strange and mysterious. Strange and mysterious, however, it was and

is destined to remain. The travellers were now ascending a long hill, and as Mr. Pinchbold watched with eager anxiety the movements of his young friend, he saw him execute the following manœuvres. He ran on ahead to a considerable distance, suddenly paused, tucked up his trousers above his knees, *hopped on one leg*, and finally disappeared over the brow of the hill. When the two travellers reached the top of that eminence, the boy was nowhere to be seen. A strange crowing sound was, however, heard in the distance, and as it could be attributable to no lungs of bird or animal known to zoologists, Mr. Pinchbold at once attributed it to the mystic boy, and construing it into a signal to be interpreted by the unknown agencies of whom the boy was the emissary, gave himself up for lost.

The line of apple-trees which extended along each side of the road which the travellers were pursuing, and the imperfectly ripe fruit of which may or may not have had some share in the presence of the company of boys which had so disturbed Mr. Pinchbold's peace of mind; this line of apple-trees (miles long) now gave place to a few houses indicating the presence of a village. The distance from Doullens to Amiens was very short, but Bijou's lameness was now so confirmed and serious an impediment to their progress that it was determined to give her a rest and a feed of corn at this village, in order to give her a better chance of reaching Amiens, for even the attainment of this early stage in their journey was now becoming a doubtful matter in the minds of our two disconsolate travellers. The mare was taken out then and put up in the stables of a small auberge which

ment, with a [redacted]

A little hor[redacted] in an eno[redacted] in such gigantic harness that [redacted] with its father's clothes on, the shafts [redacted] having something of the aspect of a pair of huge shirt-collars: this is the first thing we find noted with an illustrative sketch in Mr. Pinchbold's diary. His next remarks bear reference to a discovery of a new propensity in Bijou, which is so remarkable that we will give it in his own words.

"On returning to the stable," writes Mr. Pinchbold, "we found that Bijou, whom we had left in a stall next the wall of the building, had been removed to one which occupied the central place in the stable. While we were speculating as to the probable reason of this change having been made in her quarters, the owner of the place entered, and asked us if we were aware that our horse belonged to the tribe of the Earth-eaters. We hastened to deny all knowledge of the existence even of so tremendous a race of creatures; upon which we were informed that it was by no means a thing unheard of for a horse to manifest a liking for the walls of its stable if they happened to be of earth instead of brick and stone, and that this taste had unquestionably been shown by Bijou, a fact of which ocular proof was given in the shape of certain recently scraped holes in the wall close to which Bijou had been standing. We congratulated the owner of the house on his good fortune in having made this discovery before the whole stable was eaten up, and became very jocose on the subject of the pre-

[redacted] Mr. [redacted]old goes on to [redacted]n future, as surely will be our [redacted]on the authorities at those inns where we make a temporary stay that they must on no account place this unhappy quadruped next to the wall of the stable, lest the whole building should disappear in the course of the night before her insatiate appetite. How dangerous, too, to sit behind such an animal. May we not expect some day, if it should be our lot to pass through a ploughed field, that she will become frantic at the sight of her favourite food, and, deserting the road, will establish herself where it is found in such abundance, declining to return any more to the regions of oats and civilization."

The short journey from the resting-place where Bijou's earth-eating propensities were discovered, to Amiens, was by no means accomplished in a short time. It was a hot afternoon, and the road was a very straight one; the pace was very slow, and a lethargy of the most profound description descended upon the two travellers as they jogged along, Mr. Fudge especially being overcome with such torpor that he was obliged to lie back in his seat and drive with one eye open at a time.

At last there became discernible, at a considerable distance in front of them, an object lying near the horizon, which at once aroused the interest and dispelled the lethargy of both our travellers. It is curious how, in the midst of the huge natural features which make up a landscape, anything that men's

hands have raised is always so distinct and so conspicuous. There was a curious abruptness about that dark, square-looking lump, at which Mr. Fudge and his friend were gazing, which made it singularly noticeable and conspicuous. Certainly the architect who built the cathedral of Amiens set a mark upon the earth which men are little likely to overlook.

"It looks very grand and lowering there in the distance," said Mr. Pinchbold.

"What an extraordinary difference there is between the marvels of this age and those of the old times," Mr. Fudge answered. "The wonders of this age seem chiefly great in an immaterial sense, and are little characterized by outward splendour or magnificence. Look at those telegraph poles," he continued, pointing to a row of them that lined the railroad near which they were travelling; "look at those bare poles that carry the magic wires, and then at the cathedral of Amiens, and consider which is the most imposing; yet which is the greatest wonder?"

It was nearly two hours after they had first caught sight of the cathedral of Amiens that, as a romancer would say, "a vehicle of the kind used in the north of France for short journeys, and drawn by a stout white mare of the country, was seen wending slowly along the streets of Amiens." Slowly, indeed; it seemed to both our friends, as if they would really never get to their destination; and if the Hotel de l'Ecu had been half a mile further off than it really was, it appeared as if that additional distance would have been more than poor Bijou's powers could have mastered. Dusty, despondent, hot, and tired, they limped along the smart streets of flourishing Amiens

and as at length the two travellers descended in the stableyard of the excellent hotel just mentioned, they both felt that the further continuance of their cruise was a doubtful affair at best, and that, at any rate, they must depend for their means of progression on something more secure than the failing limbs of "la Perle de Malaise."

CHAPTER VIII.

A SHORT CHAPTER, IN WHICH THE TRAVELLERS ARE FAIRLY AGROUND, AND IN THE COURSE OF WHICH THIS TRUE HISTORY HAS A VERY NARROW ESCAPE OF COMING TO AN UNTIMELY END.

THE stay of our travellers at Amiens was destined to be a longer one than they had anticipated. Of course, the first thing to be done on the morning after their arrival was to consult all sorts of authorities on the subject of Bijou's lameness. The master of the hotel, a brisk young man, whose life was passed in the stables, the numerous staff of grooms and helpers, and finally a veterinary surgeon, all pronounced their opinions with great confidence; and all, though varying slightly as to particulars, were of accord that her disease was a disease of the hoof, that it was a very serious one, and that its cure, if it could be effected at all—a doubtful point—would, at any rate, be a very long and tedious affair.

A little, almost invisible, vertical crack on the hoof of the near fore-leg, and certain annulated lines, faintly marked in its circumference, were all the external evidences of Bijou's unsoundness of which the eye could take note. Yet in this hoof the mischief lay; and from these small indications the learned in such

matters gathered that the hoof was utterly unsound, and that the following course of treatment would be necessary for its cure. In the first place, it would be necessary to remove her shoes, and relieve the heat and inflammatory symptoms by bleeding; it would be necessary to keep her off the road for *six months;* and, at the same time, that she might not be without exercise, she must be employed in agricultural work, treading on soft ground, and moving through ploughed fields, where her tender feet would not be subjected to the succession of shocks which they encountered every time they came in contact with the paved roads of France.

"In short," said the veterinary surgeon, after concluding his examination, "if you have any estate in the country, any farm under your control, I should recommend you to have the mare removed there without delay, and put through the course of treatment which I have indicated; but, if not, I think your best plan would be to get rid of the animal at once, and to make up your mind to a certain amount of loss, which is inevitable."

The gentleman who thus spoke was a very different kind of personage from M. Morve of Malaise. He spoke freely, and to the point, and gave you the impression that you might really place some reliance on the opinion which he gave.

"And is there no means," inquired Mr. Fudge, after listening to the opinion which has just been quoted; "is there no possibility, by medical treatment, and by allowing a short time for rest, of fitting the mare to go on with her journey?"

"She would break down again, sir," was the

answer, "before she had been two hours in the shafts."

"And how long do you conceive it would take to reestablish her, and fit her once more for work?"

"It would take at least six months."

"During which time I should have to pay for her keep, as well as to remunerate you for your medical superintendence?"

"Both would, unfortunately, be necessary."

"And what should you conscientiously recommend me to do?"

"I should recommend you, as I have said before, to remember that the first loss, in these cases, is always the least, that it is ill to throw good money after bad, and that, in short, you will do best to sell her at once, and for what she will fetch."

The next question now of the many which were importunate for answers was, whether the law gave any remedy to persons in the position of our two Englishmen? There are certain defects, called in the law language of France *des vices redhibitoires*, the existence of which, in a horse that has been sold for sound, are considered to vitiate the contract, and make it null and void. Intermittent lameness, proceeding from some chronic malady, is naturally enough included among these; but, unfortunately, the process of accusation must be commenced within nine days of the purchase of the animal. It was on the sixth day after the travellers had left Malaise that the consultation at Amiens took place; and Bijou had been four days in M. Dessin's stables the property of Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold, before the journey was

commenced at all. The delay, then, granted by the law had already expired, without counting the time that it would take to convey the mare back to Malaise. There was nothing, then, to be expected as regarded legal assistance in this difficulty. M. Grisois had got the money safe in his pocket, and had got rid of an unsound horse; and M. Morve—what of him?

This was the next question. Had this worthy gentleman, when employed by Mr. Fudge to examine the mare in his interests, had he known of the defect which had since been developed in such terrible force? Had he made common cause with Grisois, and been paid by him to pronounce an unsound animal free from all defect in wind and limb?

Strangely enough there actually did appear to be some shadow of a doubt, though but a shadow, on this point. The landlord of the hotel, a man who was thoroughly up to everything connected with horses, and who had pronounced exactly the same opinion with regard to Bijou's lameness which had subsequently been given by the medical authority—the landlord of the hotel was distinctly of opinion that M. Morve must have known all about it, and he was backed by his groom and a whole yardfull of assistants and amateurs. The veterinary gentleman, however, gave it—though very hesitatingly—as his opinion that it was just possible that the defect under which the mare was suffering might not have existed in such force as to be noticeable at the time of her examination, and that it had been developed since by the severe test to which her powers had been put in the course of the long journey from Malaise to Amiens.

The veterinary gentleman backed himself up in this opinion by reverting to the fact that when the two travellers had tried the mare at Malaise she gave no signs of lameness, either when they went out in company with M. Grisois, or still more on a subsequent occasion, when after they had concluded the purchase they took her out in a carriage belonging to M. Dessin, and drove her upwards of twenty miles at a stretch, a proceeding with a description of which it was not needful at the time to trouble the reader, and which need only be alluded to in this its proper place in the few words devoted to it above.

With all that might be said by the veterinary gentleman in defence of M. Morve, it must be owned that not the slightest doubt remained on the minds of either Mr. Fudge or Mr. Pinchbold, on the subject of his treachery. The veterinary gentleman would naturally say all that he could for a member of his own fraternity, a circumstance which diminished somewhat the value of his testimony on this branch of the subject. Mr. Fudge remembered the meeting with M. Morve so near the abode of Grisois, and so immediately after the expression of opinion which had led to the purchase of the mare; he remembered, too, the impression left generally on his mind by the appearance and behaviour of the great Morve; and he doubted, or rather he did not doubt, but altogether mistrusted the integrity of that gentleman's conduct. As he and Mr. Pinchbold now talked the whole affair over, they even went the length of mixing M. Porquet up in this iniquitous transaction. His anxiety to make them buy the mare, his shuffling conduct about his own horses, and his obvious unwillingness to

afford them any facilities for trying any one of them, all these things it must be acknowledged had rather a sinister look, and taken with the fact that Grisois owned to having originally had Bijou from M. Porquet, seemed to point at the probability of there being some profit to accrue to that mysterious gentleman from the sale of "la Perle de Malaise."

And now what was to be done? To attempt any patching up of Bijou's lameness, to charge themselves with the long and expensive cure, the necessity of which had been urged by every one who had been consulted about her, would, besides its costliness and uncertain issue, have been a course attended with a delay in their journey of no shorter a period than six months. They would have, if adopting this plan, to leave the mare behind them and go back to England, with the prospect of returning in the spring to continue that Cruise upon Wheels which had met with so disastrous an interruption. Surely with all the uncertainties of life, with the knowledge that so many things might occur in six months to frustrate their plans, this would be a most preposterous course. It was not to be thought of. Think over it as they might, twist it and turn it this way and that way as much as they would, to one conclusion, alas, they were ever obliged to return!

They must part with Bijou.

Now this was a great blow, to estimate the full severity of which it is necessary that the reader should remember first, the trouble which Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold had had in getting her, and secondly, the singular suitableness of the animal herself to their purpose in all respects, saving and excepting this one

terrible and fatal defect of lameness. By Mr. Fudge especially, the loss of Bijou was viewed almost in the light of a misfortune, for he had got quite an affection for the poor beast in consequence of her docility, her good temper, and other valuable qualities. The blow, though rather a heavy one, had however fallen, and it was no use to complain.

And now that this question was decided, there still remained a great deal to be settled yet. Was this impediment which had come in the way of their project to be considered final? Was the journey, which, in the matter of actual progression, had been an affair of four days only, to come to an end at that early stage? The journey, so long thought over, so fondly dwelt on in imagination, the journey so delightful as it had proved, exceeding the most sanguine anticipations which either of the travellers had formed of its enjoyableness, was it to be cut short at its commencement? The journey that had Switzerland for its goal, the base of the Alps for its glorious termination, was it to come suddenly to a termination at the end of a four days' drive, a drive from Malaise to Amiens?

These were some of the questions which agitated the minds of our two unfortunate friends, during the course of the day which sealed the fate of Bijou. The conclusion of that day left them still undecided on the subject, Mr. Pinchbold being, on the whole, disposed to abandon the project, and even going the length of intimating that "he had a presentiment that if they made any further attempt to get to their journey's end, some dread disaster would overtake them." Mr. Fudge, though a little dashed, it must be owned, was still not prepared to abandon their

original intention so readily, in addition to which, it must be owned, that his faith in Mr. Pinchbold's "presentiments" was not so strong as to give those forebodings a powerful influence in determining the nature of his conduct.

It is astonishing how much the period of the day and the state of the weather have to do with the views we take of our affairs. When Mr. Pinchbold woke the next morning, after enjoying a good night's rest, when he demolished his barricades, and throwing open the window let in the brght sunshine and the fresh air, he took so different a view of the question of the preceding day, that he was fain to go and tap at Mr. Fudge's door, and to impart to that gentleman his opinion that to give up their project at so early a stage and at the first serious obstacle, would be a dastardly act, and would expose them at once to their own self-reproach, and to the ridicule of those friends whom they had acquainted by letter with their intention of driving all the way to Geneva in a carriole.

"The fact is," said Mr. Pinchbold, in conclusion, "I have mentioned what we had in contemplation to one or two of my clients, to whom I happened to be writing before leaving Malaise, and, as they are friends as well as clients, I shouldn't like them to laugh at us."

Poor Mr. Pinchbold, if all the laughter they had to encounter was to come from the throats of that gentleman's clients, they would not have much to fear.

Of course Mr. Fudge hailed with joy this change in his friend's views on the subject of the journey, and it was agreed that directly after breakfast they

should turn their attention to the important work of providing a successor to the unfortunate Bijou. The first step necessary was to find out the chief horse-dealer in the town, and this having been effected, our friends set off on a fine sunny morning to visit this gentleman's premises and inspect his stock.

With this proceeding recommenced a series of transactions, all so closely resembling what had taken place at Malaise, that they do not call for much especial description. Once more they had to execute long promenades down vistas of whisking tails in the stables of suspicious-looking dealers. Once more they felt that every separate animal they passed was simply a bundle of concealed defect and vice. Once more they had horses brought out of stables which they examined and tried, and which they felt neither examination nor trial revealed in their true colours. Once more they were introduced to some specially ill-looking beast, and informed that it was the favourite playfellow of the owner's children, that it was habitually driven by his wife, that it walked into the kitchen to solicit bits of sugar, that it was afraid of nothing, that you might beat a drum upon its head; that you might fire pistols off about its ears, and dance a hornpipe upon its back. Once more they were introduced to animals with conspicuous vertebræ, with limp ears, with pendant lips, with swollen limbs, bearing the gridiron-like impression of occasional firings, with wall-eyes, and every other conceivable and inconceivable defect.

It was a weary time this that they passed at Amiens. Many were the horses tried during that five or six days—many were the transactions almost

concluded, but broken off at the last moment for excellent reasons, many were the hours of weariness, ennui, and desperation. There was, however, one source of amusement connected with the place, on which they drew largely, and which never failed to interest them.

Staying in the same hotel with our two travellers was a certain little dapper and fiery General, concerning whom the whole town was in a great state of excitement, and who was temporarily quite the hero of the place. He had come upon some mission of examining and reviewing the troops stationed in the town, and every day a little staff of officers used to come in the afternoon to fetch him and escort him through the streets in triumph to the barracks. This was the event of the day for the whole town, and not less so for our two Englishmen. There never was such a fussification as took place invariably at the moment of the General's issuing from the hotel. There never were such a set of unmanageable horses as those on which the members of the suite were mounted; there never were such clattering of hoofs, such prancings, and such neighings. The General had a little white Arab horse of great spirit and beauty, which used to be arrayed in such marvellous trappings and such gorgeous housings, that it looked almost as fine as an Astley's war-horse and almost as unreal. Unfortunately, however, it was not quite so successfully trained as its prototype of the Circus, and this its sole defect invariably showed itself, unfortunately, always at the exact moment when its gallant owner wanted to get upon its back. Nothing would induce the Arab steed to approach the mag-

nificent and glittering person of its proprietor. The fact was, that what with feathers, what with gold lace, what with orders and equipments, with buckles, weapons, and accoutrements, the little General was such a blazing object as he stood upon the mounting-block waiting for his charger, that it was not wonderful that this animal should, when called upon to approach this brilliant mass of colour and metal, execute a series of the most terrific "shies" ever performed by any member of its tribe. There was no inducing it to approach the mounting-block. The grooms and assistants who had the spirited little beast in charge were dragged hither and thither by it—dragged everywhere, in short, but in the direction where the distinguished officer was standing waiting for his horse. As soon as he had stood there till his patience was exhausted, the General would jump down, and, since his horse would not go to him, would make the most tremendous efforts to go to his horse. But this plan was not attended with any success. If the General advanced boldly across the yard, the little Arab would turn round and fairly bolt, carrying with him a whole tribe of grooms and hangers-on, and scattering confusion in all directions; while if this gallant officer, as he would in desperation do at last, consented to have recourse to stratagem, and approached his charger by a circuitous route from behind, it would invariably happen that just as he had reached the animal's side, some tassel, or tag, or belt, or other caparison of the General's, would wave, or flap, or whisk within range of a backward glance on the part of the little Arab, and off he would dart—sometimes with the General holding on

to its mane and trying to vault upon its back (a feat, by the bye, often performed in novels, but seldom in real life)—sometimes with the General hopping after it, with one foot entangled in the stirrup, to the loss of all dignity then and ever afterwards.

This scene, made additionally stimulating by the kickings and prancings of all the horses ridden by the staff, which were engaged by their proprietors in insane attempts to dodge the little Arab and bring him to a stand-still, but which invariably became infected by the Arab's example, and seeming to regret that they had not also declined to be mounted by their respective owners, endeavoured to remedy this oversight by frantic efforts to kick them off now they were on—this scene, with an accompaniment of screamings, shoutings, ravings, roarings, and neighings, it was the especial delight of Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold to witness daily from the windows of the hotel. Sometimes it would terminate in the chasing of the Arab into a corner, where he was held up against a wall with his nose in pincers till the General was got upon his back, with no greater misfortune than a crushed leg against the wall; sometimes this noble officer would consent to stratagem, and would veil himself from head to foot in a sombre cloak till he was fairly mounted, when he could disclose his brilliant presence in safety, receiving the plumed hat, which he had not ventured to wear in his disguise, from an attendant; while sometimes, and after the Arab had learned to see through the cloak-dodge, it ended in the turbulent animal being blindfolded with a handkerchief, and so brought unawares into the presence of the object of its alarm.

Once on horseback, the General seemed to forget all the trouble and difficulty which had attended the attaining of that glorious position. Then would the doors of the inn-yard be thrown open, and rattling, jigging, jolting, and prancing, the whole party would be disgorged into the main street of Amiens. Now the General had seen some picture or print of Napoleon crossing the Alps, or of some other great commander leading his troops on to glory, and he had learnt to form himself on this model. Whether he considered that to lead his staff of officers through the streets of Amiens to the barracks was to conduct them to glory—or whether he was so convinced that glory attended his career go where he would, that he was conducting his faithful army in its paths go where he would—certain it is that the General always rode along at the head of his troops as if he were going to conquer a kingdom or two that very afternoon, and wreathe around his brows a garland of immortal renown. At every second step the General turned round and addressed some order or remark to those behind him, which it was impossible by reason of the clatter and noise that they could hear; then he would point on in front to the contest that awaited them, or beckon his flagging followers to renewed exertions.

The spectacle of the little General curvetting and dancing up the street as he led his troops on to glory was, then, to the whole town of Amiens a sight of ever new and unflagging interest; while with our two Englishmen it was so favourite an exhibition that they never missed a single repetition of it, and that Mr. Pinchbold was even induced to attempt to

commemorate with his pencil the awful impressiveness of the scene.

The two friends spent five days at Amiens, nearly the whole of which time was taken up with fruitless attempts to provide a substitute for La Perle de Malaise. At the end of that time, however, they seemed no nearer to the attainment of their object than they were at the beginning. Possibly there really was not an animal to be had in the town suitable to their purpose; possibly their recent failure had made them morbidly mistrustful and hard to please. At all events, so it was; and on the morning of the fifth day both gentlemen began to entertain serious doubts as to the possibility of proceeding with their journey. Tired out with failure and disappointment, they both felt that day strongly disposed to sell the carriole as well as Bijou for what it would fetch, and abandon the idea of the journey then and ever after. The fact is, that their project had received so severe a check that the whole fabric they had raised in imagination tottered to its very foundation. The crisis was a severe one, and it seemed very doubtful whether the patient would get over it.

Great things often depend for their existence on some very small contingency. Mr. Fudge and his companion had actually taken the step of going to a carriage-dealer's shop with the intention of inquiring how much its proprietors would give for the carriole, when Mr. Pinchbold, happening to glance at what was written over the shop entrance, saw there an announcement which a little altered the position of affairs, and gave their darling project one more chance of realization.

It was simply an announcement that the coach-maker had ware-rooms, in which carriages could be put up for a small monthly payment.

There never was such a relief as that announcement afforded to our two Englishmen. By leaving the carriage with this man, they retained the possibility of recommencing their journey at any moment—recommencing it next week—recommencing it next month—recommencing it next year. It was the very thing. They could now for a time shake off the continual anxiety on one subject which had preyed upon them so long that they could scarcely see it at all in its true colours. They could get away to Paris, where, perhaps, some new idea would suggest itself, some new horse might be found, where, in short, something or other would be sure to turn up.

Everything was now quickly arranged. The coach-maker was to send for the carriole, and to keep it till further orders, and certain negotiations which had been entered into with the principal horse-dealer in the place touching the sale of Bijou were now brought swiftly to a conclusion—a conclusion, by the bye, which was very far from profitable to the finances of our two travellers. The horse-dealer's offer, however, was the best that was to be had, and there was nothing to be done but to make the best of it.

It must be owned that the parting with Bijou was rather a wrench. To Mr. Fudge, especially, who had been more intimately mixed up with her than his friend, it was more particularly a great trial to see the last of her. She had been very good, very patient, and, as far as in her lay, very serviceable. It was not her fault that she had been sold as sound

with a terrible blemish that made her warranty a lie. Bijou had done all she could, and as she limped out of the stable-yard of the Hotel de l'Ecu, Mr. Fudge felt that their cruise had brought them into troubled waters, and that it was a chance at best whether they were not in reality altogether aground.

But if Mr. Fudge felt this at the moment of parting with Bijou, what were his sensations and those of his companion when, shortly afterwards, they found themselves seated in a carriage on the Chemin de Fer du Nord, and with their faces turned towards Paris. Here was an end to their adventure! Here was an inglorious way of proceeding on their journey! Here was a chance for Mr. Pinchbold's "clients!" They who had rumbled over drawbridge and under portcullis in the old French towns, to be whizzing now out of that most hideous and detestable of all structures—a station. The contrast was tremendous, and certainly did not tell in favour of their present mode of travelling.

Both gentlemen were much depressed, and it was not till they had arrived safely in Paris, and were seated in the *salle-à-manger* of the Hotel du Helder, with an excellent dinner before them, that they felt any mitigation of the symptoms of despondency which had become developed in the course of their journey.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE TWO FRIENDS ONCE MORE ENGAGE IN A DESPERATE STUGGLE TO GET OFF AGAIN, WITH WHAT FINAL RESULT THE READER MUST STUDY THIS CHAPTER IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN.

Paris is one of those places which depends for the estimation in which we hold it, to a certain extent, on the state of health and spirits which we are in, when we walk about its streets, eat and drink in its cafés, or occupy the benches of its theatres. If we are in a happy humour, are surrounded with friendly faces, and have plenty of money, it is a delightful spot; but there are those who have sojourned in that city when in low spirits, without friends, or hard up, who have pronounced that it can wear as doleful an air as any other town.

Our two travellers seemed by one consent to have agreed to banish the subject of the journey from their minds, as they certainly did from their conversation They went into Paris life as completely as possible. That wondrous day which can be passed at Paris, and at Paris only, they did full justice to. They had their cup of coffee, and the accompanying *brioche*, before they left their respective bedrooms; then they wrote letters, or transacted any business that it was neces-

sary to attend to; then they read the papers, and sauntered out into the sunshine, basking along the Boulevard on their way to the Café du Cardinal, where they breakfasted. The *dejeuner à la fourchette* over, Mr. Fudge had always some wonderful point of antiquarian interest which he wished to visit, and this would lead to some other, involving an immense amount of poking about in all sorts of intricate holes and corners, in search of bits of old wall, or fragments of ancient gateways. Mr. Fudge was never weary of wandering about old Paris, the ancient part about the Temple, the island of the Cité, the Faubourg St. Germain, the Quais; all these regions were to him fraught with an enormous and never-flagging interest. And surely it is a great question whether it *is* ever possible to get tired—except physically—of wandering about the streets of Paris. Of all the amusements and diversions that Paris has to offer, those which she gives you for nothing—in allowing you the run of her streets—are the best and most piquant.

It is a question whether the antiquarian ardour of Mr. Pinchbold was quite equal to that of his friend and companion. To judge by what he said, you would have come to the conclusion that it was, but certain furtive yawnings which, towards the latter part of the afternoon, became intermingled with his conversation, and certain absent repetitions of the same question, seemed to indicate a condition of mental obliteration, which coming on invariably at about four o'clock, P.M., increased with each lengthening quarter of an hour that intervened between that period just named and dinner-time.

They used to dine ordinarily at one of those restaurants which occupy a sort of half-way position between the ruinous splendour of Véfours and the lower order of restaurants about the markets. To these last, however, when one of those fits which would sometimes come upon Mr. Fudge, causing him to exclaim helplessly, "No income can stand this!" was at its strongest, at such times, we say, they would descend a little in the social scale, and take their meal in company with the rich cattle-owners and farmers who frequent such eating-establishments as the Pied de-Mouton in the Rue du Four St. Honoré, or Baraltes in the Rue aux Fers. Neither of them places, by the bye, where any man need consider it a hardship to take his dinner. These same rich drovers and graziers know well what they are about. Both the taverns are near the markets, the meat is fresh, the vegetables excellent, and the partridge with a white waistcoat of bacon, and a couch of fried bread to repose upon, is a dish than which the united cooks of France and England may be defied to produce a better. Nor are these gentry less particular about their wines than about the viands which they accompany; and there are many flashy restaurants in commanding situations, where you will not get so good a glass of Bordeaux as you will find in the more humble eating-establishments just named.

Dinner over, our two friends would issue forth once more. Sometimes, if they had still a leg to stand upon, for an evening walk along the Boulevards, and through mazes of lighted passages; sometimes they would betake themselves to a café, or wile the time away with a game of billiards; while at other times

they would constitute themselves into a Commision of Inquiry concerning the Present State of the French Drama, and would squeeze themselves into a couple of stalles d'orchestre at one of the Boulevard theatres.

Of course, too, on a wet day the Louvre was not always to be avoided, and here they would wander about, observing the different kind of visitors who frequented that place of torment, Mr. Pinchbold sometimes making a sketch of any specially remarkable specimen of character to which his notice might be attracted.

And yet it came to pass that among all the gaieties and distractions of Paris—a town in which, as we have said above, a man may be as wretched as in any other —Mr. Fudge wore a dissatisfied and gloomy aspect. Nor was Mr. Pinchbold much happier.

"I cannot stand," said Mr. Fudge one day, "the endless rows of French faces which we meet as we walk along the Boulevard. I never meet with one that looks as if it was the countenance of a man with a soul. I see no signs of Pity, of Conscience, or even of Philosophic speculation. They are all materialists, young and old; they think of no other thing besides the gratification of their appetites, and the acquirement of money. By heavens, Pinchbold!" said Mr. Fudge, suddenly, "have Frenchmen any redeeming qualities?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," returned Mr. Pinchbold; "they are supposed to be very polite, are they not?"

"It is a politeness of bowing and scraping, and pulling off of hats. If you put it to the test, if you put gain or loss of francs in the scale, it vanishes, and the tiger-like ferocity of the animal comes out in

all its native force. Hang it, they call *us* a nation of shopkeepers, why, they are fifty times as much absorbed in the pursuit of business as we are. I am sick of it all, I am sick of the blazing shops that nobody ever seems to go into, I am sick of the swindling restaurants, I am sick of the theatres, where, though the performance is good enough, you cannot enjoy it, for the discomfort produced again by their infernal avarice. Here we go and pay six or seven francs a-piece for what they call fauteuils d'orchestre, and are half-killed by squeezing, and by the detestable absence of ventilation, in which these beggars delight. I always get, too," continued Mr. F., "between a fat man who oozes through the arm of the stall on one side, and a fat woman who protrudes through it on the other, and I always find that the tallest man in France occupies the seat in front of me."

"Fudge," said Mr. Pinchbold, solemnly, "I have remarked of late that you are not happy. How is it? I am not enjoying life as keenly as I could wish myself."

"Well, Pinchbold," replied Mr. Fudge, "it is no use concealing the thing any longer, I am haunted."

"Haunted!" repeated Mr. Pinchbold, turning rather pale.

"Yes, haunted. Haunted by an idea, by a memory, by the thought of an enterprise entered on."

"Ha!" ejaculated Mr. Pinchbold, perceiving how the land lay.

"And abandoned almost as soon as begun. The journey, Pinchbold! The journey—the thought of it pursues me. If it had failed, if it had proved less delightful than we anticipated, one might have borne

its coming to this untimely end, but when it was such a glorious success as far as it went, when all that we hoped from it was more than carried out, to have given it up like this!"

"Don't let's give it up, then!" burst in Mr. Pinchbold, manfully; "I'm ready to go on with it. I have long felt my happiness to be bound up in that journey."

"You have long felt your happiness!" murmured Mr. Fudge, aghast.

"Yes, *I*," returned Mr. P.; "it cannot be abandoned like this. It is like sitting down to dinner with a furious appetite, and being called away directly after the soup. It is like getting into the interesting part of a novel, and having" (Mr. Pinchbold had an amiable weakness which induced him always to talk as if he had a practice) "and having an attorney's boy come in with a brief of importance. It is like—"

"Never mind what it is like," said Mr. Fudge, "but tell me truly—do you really miss the carriole and our life in connexion with it?"

"I do!" replied Mr. Pinchbold, fervently.

"Do you really regret that the journey has been arrested as it has?"

"I do!" said Mr. P., again.

"And do you really and sincerely wish that we could go on with it once more?"

"With all my heart and soul!" was the reply.

"Then," continued Mr. Fudge, "we will not lose another moment, but go at it again with all our energies. What a relief it will be! Haunted!" ejaculated Mr. Fudge, "why never was any man so haunted. I never heard the crack of a whip that did

not strike the raw wound in my heart, left by our mishap with Bijou. I never saw a white horse without a pang!"

"I never saw a horse *at all* without a pang," remarked Pinchbold.

"How could we ever think of giving up our project in this way? It cannot be. I will write to old Promptjean, at Amiens, to send the carriole here by railway. I will send to London for some more money."

"And so will I," cried P.

"And we will try our luck once more among Paris horses, and Paris rogues, instead of country ones. And now, Pinchbold, do you think your powers are equal to the encounter of all that a horse transaction involves? Are they equal to the rows of whisking tails, the descriptions of faultless horses, all exactly the same? Can you hear again the old story, that the animal we are examining is afraid of nothing, that it is five years old, that it has never stumbled, never been down, never shied, never kicked, never been ill in its life?"

"I think I can," replied Mr. Pinchbold, in a faint tone.

"That it could be driven by a child in arms; that it is the special favourite of the horse-seller's wife, who feeds it every morning with lumps of sugar; that it is to be sold in consequence of a death; of the owner going to some foreign land—in consequence of anything but the merest suspicion of a defect?"

"All these things," said Mr. Pinchbold, "I will endeavour to bear."

"Then let us start at once," said Mr. Fudge, rising

and putting on his hat, "and not lose another moment in setting the affair in motion."

And now, indeed, it was not long before our two friends were once again involved in all the sea of turmoils, doubts, hesitations, misgivings, hopes and fears, which are the lot of all those who are engaged in the difficult occupation of choosing a horse. Day after day did the two travellers go out in the morning sanguine and energetic, to return in the evening weary and hopeless, as far from their end as ever. Over and over again did they abandon the thing as useless, and over and over again did they return to the charge, urged on, it must be owned, by the almost morbid determination with which Mr. Fudge continued still to cling to his darling project. It was a miserable time; both of them, but Mr. Pinchbold especially, lost flesh considerably. The last-named gentleman, indeed, would at times complain that he was sure his reason was going, that he was engendering slowly a new kind of madness, a sort of hippophobia. His meals did him no good; he could look at nothing but horses in the street; he could read nothing but horse advertisements in the Journal; his sleep was broken by the appearance of horses' heads floating about in the darkness; and in his dreams he lived among these dreadful animals a life of terror and dismay.

The description of one day consumed in these ineffectual researches will suffice, as well as an account of the eight or ten which our two friends actually spent in going from one end of Paris to the other in search of a horse.

It would happen, perhaps, that in the course of

breakfast Mr. Pinchbold, who over night had expressed his conviction that it was insanity to go on with an undertaking which the fates had obviously set their faces against—Mr. Pinchbold, we say, would suddenly discover, while turning over the pages of the morning's *Siècle*, that "un bon cheval Anglais" was for sale, and that those whom the advertisement concerned might see the animal at such and such hours, in such and such a street. Then would this inconsistent gentleman suddenly find out that he had a presentiment that *the* horse which was suited for their purpose, indeed, which had come into the world with an express eye to the same, had at length turned up, and that this one more experiment it was their imperative duty to make. Then would Mr. Fudge also eye the advertisement to see if he could extract any hidden information from it. Then would the two friends begin to speculate about what kind of a horse it was that was thus advertised, what colour, what size, what price; and then it would end in both gentlemen rising from the table, putting on their hats, and setting off full of hope and vigour to the locality indicated in the newspaper, which was always in some occult and unknown part of Paris, and always at an immense distance from the hotel.

Arrived at their destination (after incalculable failures in finding it) Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold would be received by a fashionable coachman in undress, who, on being informed of their errand, would introduce them into a magnificent stable, where they would find a tall, highly-groomed, slender animal, obviously only fitted for town work, and whose daily duties had consisted in drawing, assisted by a friend,

a very small brougham about the streets of Paris for a couple of hours out of the twenty-four. He was probably sold, too, from having some defect that rendered him incapable of even so much work as this; and was, as a further inducement to purchase, offered at the tempting price of two thousand five hundred francs.

Having thanked the coachman in undress for the sight of this interesting quadruped, the two travellers would emerge into the street disconsolate; when Mr. Pinchbold would say, "Ah, it's no use;" and Mr. Fudge would say nothing at all, but would wander on in a sort of vague hope that "something" would occur that might once more throw a horse across the path of his destiny. Nor was Mr. Pinchbold's conduct consistent altogether with the despondent remark which has just been quoted, as emanating from his lips. Although it "was no use," he was continually looking out for horse-dealers' yards, and was for ever running back to look at all sorts of little scraps of paper pasted against the walls, which he always thought were advertisements for horses, and which almost invariably turned out to relate to wet-nurses, endowed by nature with incredible qualifications for the profession, who were open to an advantageous offer. But Mr. Pinchbold's researches among the advertisements which are so thickly plastered over the blank walls of Paris, were not always without result.

On the day which we are describing, as he and Mr. Fudge were walking along the street in which they had just examined the horse which had been advertised

in the *Siècle,* Mr. Pinchbold suddenly called out to his companion, who was a good deal in advance, and that with such energy of tone, as speedily brought Mr. Fudge back to his side. That gentleman found Mr. Pinchbold contemplating an immense yellow poster, which was adorning the wood-work of a screen behind which some repairs were going on.

"Look here, Fudge," said Mr. Pinchbold, "here is a thing which I feel a presentiment will turn out highly important to us."

Mr. Fudge looked at the poster by which his friend's attention had been arrested, and soon became highly interested in it himself. It was headed "Tattersall Français," and was in truth an advertisement of a horse auction, held every Wednesday afternoon, in a street in the neighbourhood of the Champs Elysées, at which auction were sold hebdomadally (according to poster) an immense number, and an immense variety of horses, carriages, and harnesses, all of the most super-excellent description.

"What's to-day?" asked Mr. Fudge, turning swiftly to his friend.

"Wednesday," was Mr. Pinchbold's answer.

"There would be no harm in going and seeing what it is like," said Mr. Fudge.

"Harm!" repeated Mr. P.; "it is the only thing we can do."

"We will make just this one more attempt," said Mr. Fudge, "and if it fails, we will abandon the thing for ever."

This was the phrase with which every new effort made in connexion with the prosecution of their

journey, was prefaced by Mr. Fudge. The present attempt was always to be the last, and if it failed the failure was to be considered final.

The Tattersall's of England is a shabby-looking little mews, intended originally to be of no sort of importance, but rendered gradually and by circumstances, one of the great institutions of our country. The French Tattersall's is just the reverse of this. It is intended to be a very important place indeed, and is as far from being so as can well be imagined. It is an immense establishment, with a vast covered auction room, where the horses are trotted up and down in front of the auctioneer's pulpit, and within two ranges of hurdles, which separate them from the spectators, who muster rather strong, and the buyers who muster rather weak. There is immense accommodation also in the way of stabling, and there are sale-rooms over the auction mart, where the carriages and harnesses are displayed to solicit patronage. The outside of the building presents a combination of an outrageously overgrown Swiss cottage and a flimsy railway-station, very edifying to behold.

As our two travellers laboured up the ascent which conducts to the Barrière de l'Etoile, near which the Tattersall Français is situated, they felt that fatigue which is only known in the neighbourhood of the Faubourg St. Honoré, and that heat—it was a very hot day at the end of September—by which also the quarter just named is pre-eminently distinguished. There was no one in the great auction hall when Mr. Fudge and his friend entered it, except a lean gentleman in long boots and spurs, who looked like the man who discourses with the clown in a circus, and who refuses

to take a joke on any terms whatever. This gentleman was placing papers on the auctioneer's pulpit, and arranging forms for bidders who could not secure front places, to stand up upon and signify their intentions with a nod. The circus gentleman seemed to admire all his own arrangements very much, and he possessed that very valuable bow-legged stride which is suggestive of continual horse exercise, and which, taken in connexion with buckskin breeches and hunting-boots, is very impressive, as far as the uninitiated public is concerned. The gentleman in boots replied to Mr. Fudge's inquiry, as to whether the horses which were destined for the day's sale were on view, by ushering the two friends through a side-door which led from the auction hall into a mews, with rows of stables on either side of it.

As the visitors entered the stables, a groom, stationed at the door, handed to each a printed paper, containing a catalogue of the horses which were to figure at the auction; with a descriptive notice of each animal appended. The horses looked somehow better on paper than in the flesh; but the catalogue was not without its value notwithstanding. "No. 1, a gray mare, aged, quiet to ride and drive, without warranty," was a biographical notice, which, though sounding not particularly magnificent, was very far from conveying the abject appearance of the animal whom it was supposed to describe. Mr. Fudge, assisted by Mr. Pinchbold, went straight through the catalogue, both gentlemen becoming more and more mystified as they went on, till they came to No. 14, "a bay horse, 7 years old,"—a doubtful period, by the bye, in the age of a horse—"quiet in double

harness, and warranted sound, with the exception of the *alteration* of the flank." At this point our two friends abandoned the catalogue in despair, being wholly unable to understand what was conveyed by this bewildering expression, and feeling only, on contemplating the animal to which it belonged, that its only chance of sale would be in its being certain to alter, not only in the flank, but also in every other portion of its ghastly frame. In short, the horses on view in the stables of the Parisian Tattersall's, were, with one or two exceptions, a sorry lot, and so the different amateurs, who to the number of twenty or thirty were congregated in the stables, appeared to think. They were almost all horse-jobber's dealers, fly-drivers, and horse-*agents*, a kind of gentry, these last, who get rid of your horse for you, or provide you with one that somebody else has got rid of, much as a house-agent finds you a house or tenant when you want one. They are not, as a class, personages whom from their appearance one would select as friends, or to whom a London loan company would advance 500*l.* on their own security; but they may be very valuable members of society for all that. Several ornaments of this fraternity accosted Mr. Fudge while he was engaged in examining the Tattersall stud, and pressed their cards upon him, with offers of service, at the same time cautioning him against acting upon his own judgment, and while mentioning that they knew of opportunities by which a gentleman in search of a good horse might find one, they would, at the same time, be so obliging as to point out freely all the faults possessed by every animal in the stables of the auction mart.

In this occupation of fault-finding there were indeed plenty of professors, who went round the collection on view, punching the ribs, pinching the spines, peering into the mouths, disparaging the joints, carping at the limbs, and objecting to the general appearance of every animal exhibited, in a very discouraging manner. It was astonishing to behold how Mr. Pinchbold took his tone from these amateurs. He had been at first disposed to a great admiration and appreciation of at least half the stock which he and his friend were examining, and had selected especially some five or six as peculiar objects of veneration; but no sooner had the little knot of professionals approached one of his favourites, and after probing, poking at, and peering into, all its organization, pronounced it valueless, than he, too, shook his head and informed Mr. Fudge that he had found there was a screw loose about the animal in question from the first. Thus one by one did Mr. Pinchbold abandon all his protégés with the exception of the last upon the list. This horse, described in the catalogue as "6 years old, quiet to ride and drive, and sold with warranty," had, somehow or other, escaped the animadversion of the professional gentlemen, and towards it Mr. P. continued to manifest a great and remarkable partiality. It was a bay horse, of a somewhat heavy and phlegmatic appearance, with a sleepy eye, and singularly free from all those habits of stamping, couching the ears, and looking wildly about which characterized its stable companions, and which always caused such unfeigned alarm to our apprehensive friend. Mr. Pinchbold was standing still, lost in admiration, before the stall of this apparently cold-

blooded animal, when the bell rang for the sale to begin, and everybody ran off as hard as possible to secure front places.

As Mr. Pinchbold and his friend and comrade, Mr. Fudge, followed the example of the rest of the world, the first-named gentleman took the opportunity of enlarging at great length upon the extraordinary qualities of the animal with whose virtues he had become impressed, and concluded by imparting some information which he had gained from the groom, whose confidence he had gained by a fee of one franc, and who had informed him that the horse he had thus pitched upon was not only the best, but the quietest in the place.

"And if I were you," Mr. P. concluded, "I would most decidedly have a bid for him, for I believe, most firmly, that we shall never have such a chance again."

Mr. Fudge was, however, in this case inexorable, and declined to have anything to do with the affair.

"I don't believe in the place or the horses, or anything connected with either the one or the other, said this gentleman; "and I will have nothing to do with the affair at all. But that," he continued, "is no reason why you, if you feel so strongly on the subject, should not act upon your convictions. As I bought the last horse and made a failure of it, suppose you buy the next and make a success."

Mr. Pinchbold was silent, and appeared to be deeply impressed with the words which had fallen from Mr. Fudge's lips. The two gentlemen had now reached the spacious building where the sale was to take place, and had secured places which were in front and next

the hurdles, but at a considerable distance from the auctioneer's pulpit. There were a great many persons present who had not appeared in the stables, and, as the doors were open to the public, the public entered pretty freely, and there was quite a crowd to see the sale.

The horses, from the moment of their leaving the stable, went raving mad. They were mad as they were led clattering along the passages that led to the auction hall; they were mad when they were held to be examined for the last time by the bidders; and they were madder than all when they were careered up and down the enclosed space kept for the purpose by the grooms, whose business it was to show them off.

And now that the unhappy quadrupeds were released from the shelter of a stable, and were exposed plainly to view, they became once more the objects of such fierce and furious scrutiny on the part of the amateurs (who had only previously seen them in the stable), that it was a wonder how they were able to bear up against it at all. As each fresh horse was brought from the stable, the whole crowd, consisting of the dealers, horse-jobbers, and agents before mentioned, would swoop down upon it and once more go to work, with a will, at the unfortunate beast's mouth, knees, hoofs, eyes, and all the rest of its organization, till they literally did not leave it a leg to stand upon. Nay, there was one gentleman who seemed to have a theory of his own upon the subject of testing the qualities of a horse, and who, as each specimen was brought into the auction mart, would fly at it and with his clenched fist hit it a most terrific punch in the ribs, just behind

the shoulder. Having done this and looked round immediately upon the bystanders with a knowing smile, this gentleman would retire and wait for the next arrival, upon which he would again rush forward, again administer his tremendous test, and so on through the whole list.

"He was trying their tempers," this gentleman said, in answer to a polite inquiry from Mr. Pinchbold into the nature of his motives. "If the animal resents the blow, and tries to defend itself, it has a bad temper; if, on the other hand, it takes it calmly and without offence, its temper may be relied on."

This was a tremendous wrinkle for Mr. Pinchbold. He was not slow in hastening to impart it to his companion, who was watching the progress of the sale with great interest from his place next to the hurdles.

"I propose in future," said Mr. Pinchbold, "to apply this test to every animal which we may have any serious intention of purchasing."

It is quite certain that, whatever other defects might be charged against the Parisian Tattersall's, extravagance in the price of the horses exposed there for sale could never be alleged as a reason for discountenancing the establishment. A horse that fetched twenty pounds made quite a tremendous sensation, and four, five, and ten pounds were high average prices. It was extraordinary to observe how, in spite of this, the gentleman in the pulpit seemed to have a strong internal conviction that each fresh horse that entered the lists was to prove an exception to the rule, and was to realize bids which none of his predecessors had been able to obtain. However

sorry the appearance of the animal that was put up, however obvious the jeers and expressions of contempt on the part of the public at sight of it, the formula gone through was always the same.

"No. 5," screamed the auctioneer.

"No. 5," echoed the gentleman in boots, who was balancing himself on a railing by the side of the pulpit, and holding on by it to keep himself from falling.

"No. 5," continued the auctioneer; "a chestnut mare, aged, quiet to ride and drive, sold without warranty."

"Eight hundred francs," shouted the gentleman in boots, looking briskly about him.

"Eight hundred francs," cried the auctioneer, hopefully.

Here there would occur a dead silence, interrupted, perhaps, by a scoffing laugh from some privileged amateurs.

"Seven hundred," shouted the man in boots.

"Six hundred," urged the auctioneer in a persuasive manner.

"Five hundred, just to begin with," from the boots.

"Four hundred—three—two—one hundred—anything to make a commencement."

All this time the degraded animal, whose market value was thus rapidly deteriorating, was being trotted up and down the lists, and, stimulated by the confusion of the scene and by certain cuts which were administered by the groom, would from time to time make a paralytic effort to execute some sprightly caper, a reminiscence of its youth, but now, alas!

wholly beyond its reach. After one of these, a fly-driver, perhaps, who saw some hope of a year or two of service yet left in the poor jade, would, with a tremendous effort, screw out a bid of sixty francs, grasped at only too eagerly by the now desponding auctioneer.

The low prices fetched by the different horses put up for sale at the Tattersall Français seemed to have a great effect upon Mr. Pinchbold. After observing the scene for some time in silence, that gentleman suddenly bespoke his friend's attention and solemnly informed him that he had been thinking of his (Mr. Fudge's) proposal that he should bid for the horse which had so captivated him in the stable; and that he had come to the determination that if that animal appeared as satisfactory when brought out for sale, and if, above all, it stood the application of the test which he had just learnt, and which he meant to try, that then, in short, he thought he actually would take Mr. Fudge's advice and would bid as far as five hundred francs at any rate for the bay.

Under some circumstances, perhaps, Mr. Fudge would have recalled the opinion which he had expressed, half in joke, on the subject upon which Mr. Pinchbold was consulting him; but he was now in one of those half desperate, half careless moods, when men are just the most ripe for a venture of this kind. To say the truth, too, he half doubted whether the strength of his companion's resolution would carry him through the undertaking which he talked about in such a valiant manner. At all events, he offered no opposition to Mr. Pinchbold's proposal,

and assented at once to that gentleman's request that he would retire to a distant bench while he (Mr. Pinchbold) conducted the affair, as Mr. P. felt that the consciousness that his friend was observing him would wholly unnerve him, and incapacitate him for the carrying out of his fell purpose.

From the moment that this arrangement had been made, Mr. Pinchbold's mixed importance and apprehensiveness were a sight to behold. He was unable to remain in one place or one position for five minutes together. He was for ever running off to the stables to try and get another glimpse of his favourite, and for ever referring to the list to see how soon its turn would come round.

But when its turn did at length come round, when its kicking and plunging predecessor had been removed, and Mr. Pinchbold's bay was trotted in, then indeed did the conduct of that gentleman become a study of interest and profit. Withdrawing to the opposite side of the building from the position occupied by the object of his longing, Mr. Pinchbold made a furious rush towards it with the intention of applying his newly-acquired test, but, relenting as he drew nearer to his victim, he pulled suddenly up, and administering a slight tap, which might perhaps have knocked a fly off if it had been on the spot and not very hungry, he walked off again perfectly satisfied that he had applied the test in full force, and that the bay, who had taken no notice of it at all, was distinguished by the sweetest and most long-suffering of dispositions.

Great was Mr. Fudge's surprise as he sat (in accordance with Mr. Pinchbold's request) on a dis-

tant seat and watched these proceedings of his companion; but it was still greater when he saw that gentleman mount upon a bench from which he could calculate on catching the auctioneer's eye, and set himself in earnest to his task.

The bay horse, having been now sufficiently examined and tried in all manner of ways by the amateurs, among whom a curious amount of veiled sarcasm and of covert whisperings was going on—the bay horse (Mr. Pinchbold's prize) was at length put through his paces, and was led up and down the lists as had been the case with all his predecessors. Nothing could exceed the docility of the animal. Far different from all those that had gone before, he seemed to be neither excited nor alarmed by the concourse of persons before whom he was called upon to appear. He trotted calmly up and down between the hurdles, and stopped as quiet and collected in his place under the pulpit as if he had been at the same sort of thing all his life.

It was a curious thing that from the time that this amiable beast had entered the auction-hall, public opinion seemed to have connected him in some mysterious way with Mr. Pinchbold. Whether it was that that gentleman's interest in the animal while in the stable had been observed by the amateurs, whether the groom whom Mr. P. had fee'd had spread a report that the little English gentleman was after the horse, or from what other reason it is impossible to say, but certain it is, that there were at this time many side glances bestowed upon Mr. Pinchbold by the groups of professionals, and that even with the auctioneer and the gentleman in the boots, who would whisper together

and look towards him, Mr. P. was an object of attention.

"A bay horse, six years old, quiet to ride and drive, sold with warranty," cried the auctioneer, with his eye upon Mr. Pinchbold.

"A bay horse, six years old, quiet to ride and drive, sold with warranty," repeated the gentleman in boots, gazing steadily in the same direction; "shall we say eight hundred francs for the bay to begin with?"

Mr. Pinchbold feigned a total unconsciousness, and made a paralytic attempt to cough unconcernedly.

"*Quiet* to ride and drive," said the gentleman in boots again; he had just been holding a whispered conversation with Mr. Pinchbold's friend the groom. "Shall we say six hundred francs for the bay horse, quiet to ride and drive, sold with warranty?"

There being no response to this appeal on the part of Mr. Pinchbold or any one else, the bay horse now went through the usual descending scale, till it had reached that pitch of degradation at which the auctioneer requests the bidders to "name their own price." At this point a member of the horse fraternity, stationed on the side of the lists opposite to that occupied by Mr. Pinchbold, made a bid, and called out, gazing hard at our adventurous friend as he did so.

"One hundred and fifty francs."

Now it came to pass that Mr. Fudge, sitting in a distant place against the wall, did observe that after this bid had been made, there was no member of the whole horse fraternity but fixed his gaze steadily upon his friend Mr. Pinchbold, and further, that

neither the auctioneer nor the gentleman in boots, whose ordinary function it was to look about for bidders, had eyes for any one in the building except the little English gentleman standing upon his bench. And so, when the English gentleman made thus the object of public attention did slowly and solemnly nod his head in token of a wish to advance a bid of five francs over and above the offer of the gentleman who had spoken first—when this happened, it was only what everybody expected, and nobody in the building was surprised, with the exception of Mr. Fudge.

And so, the contest once begun, the bidding soon became fast and furious, and Mr. Pinchbold, from nodding slowly and solemnly, got on to nod with violence and passion, and even at times to shout out small increases of price in a loud and business-like voice. The gentleman on the opposite side of the building, in his turn, was not behindhand, and gave Mr. Pinchbold nod for nod, increase for increase, and as, whenever there seemed any risk of the competition flagging, the auctioneer would order the bay horse to be trotted up and down, or would fall into an ecstasy of admiration over its qualities, saying that if he had not so large a stud of his own, he would buy it himself for *his wife to drive;* as these stimulants were applied from time to time, the bidding went on at a great rate, and reached the sum of four hundred francs in no time.

But if Mr. Fudge, as he sat an excited spectator of all these things, was astounded at the spirited part played on this occasion by his friend—if he was thunderstruck as he observed the unhesitating manner in which Mr. Pinchbold plunged deeper and deeper

into the contest, nodding and gesticulating like a native, and almost tumbling off his bench in the violence of his emotion—if all these things were subjects of surprise to our friend Mr. Fudge, what was his astonishment, his utter bewilderment and consternation, when he saw a man in the crowd standing close to Mr. Pinchbold hand furtively to that gentleman a piece of paper or a card—Mr. Fudge could not see which—when he saw Mr. Pinchbold, after reading what was inscribed thereon, jump down from his bench, and push his way through the crowd to where he (Mr. Fudge) was sitting, leaving his antagonist in possession of the field, and of the bay horse into the bargain.

"Come along, Fudge," said Mr. Pinchbold, hastily clutching at his friend's arm, and dragging him towards the door; "come away instantly out of this horrible place."

"But what is it?" inquired Mr. Fudge, resisting; "why have you given in? what's the matter? see—everybody is staring at us!"

"Never mind," Mr. Pinchbold articulated, breathlessly; "I'll tell you all about it—only let's get outside, and away from all these rogues and miscreants."

And in truth, so violently did Mr. Pinchbold pull at his companion's arm, and so additionally absurd did resistance make their already ridiculous situation, that Mr. Fudge was fain to give in, and in half a minute more the two friends were free of the "Tattersall's," and posting away with their backs towards that institution—down the Faubourg St. Honoré.

"Now tell me," said Mr. Fudge, attempting to arrest his companion; "tell me what is the meaning of all this."

"No—not yet—not yet," said Mr. Pinchbold; "wait, I implore you, till we get to the hotel. I can't tell you yet."

It was in vain that Mr. Fudge implored to be enlightened. Mr. Pinchbold would only hurry on, becoming hotter and more breathless every moment; nor could Mr. Fudge, who began to fear that his companion's reason was becoming unsettled, extract a word from him till they had reached their hotel in the Rue du Helder, and seated themselves in the *salle-à-manger* to wait for dinner.

It was then, and not till then, that Mr. Pinchbold, thrusting his hand into his pocket, brought out, among a quantity of miscellaneous articles, a common pasteboard card, which he placed in his companion's hand.

Mr. Fudge read hastily on the printed side of it—"Maguignon, Marchand de Chevaux, Rue Neuve des Mathurins," and then turning it over he found written in pencil, and in the French language, the following words:—

"The man who is bidding against you is the owner of the horse. The beast has a fearful temper—as I know from a man it once belonged to—and it has been *drugged this morning before it was sent to the auction.*"

Mr. Fudge sat for some time, after perusing this document, turning it over and over with his fingers, while Mr. Pinchbold was occupied (as is frequently the case with gentlemen who are waiting for dinner)

in breaking off bits of new bread and spoiling his appetite with the same.

"We must go and thank this M. Maguignon," he said presently.

"I think we had better do nothing of the kind," said his companion.

"What, don't you believe about the drugging?" inquired Mr. Pinchbold.

"I neither believe nor disbelieve it," answered Mr. Fudge. "It may be true, or it may be a story trumped up by M. Maguignon to prevent your buying the horse, and to make you choose one of his. At all events, I think you are well out of the bargain, and that the less we have to do with any of the Tattersall set the better."

"I think," replied Mr. Pinchbold, rather snappishly, "that the less we have to do with the whole thing the better. At all events, I've made my first and last movement in the affair. No more horse transactions for Francis Pinchbold." The honest gentleman was a little irritated, but he was himself again before either he or his friend had swallowed a dozen spoonfuls of soup, and as ready to laugh at his adventure at the Tattersall's as his friend was to congratulate him on the excessive spirit with which it had been carried through from beginning to end.

Such was a specimen-day of the Paris life of the two friends. They passed through many such experiences as have been here quoted, all of the same kind, though not all wearing the same form. One thing, however, was uniformly the same, and this was the conviction with which every fresh experiment ended, that they were in the hands of rogues, and in

danger of being cheated at every turn, unless they kept all their wits about them, and kept them, too, in a high state of brightness and activity.

Many more attempts were made, even after the Tattersall failure, though it is justice to say that Mr. Pinchbold remained true to his determination, and took thenceforth no share but a passive one in all future transactions. The passion of Hope, however, was very strongly developed in Mr. Fudge's constitution, and it is incredible from what failures and disappointments that gentleman would rise buoyant in the expectation that the next effort would be a successful one. He would boldly go into the neatly ordered stables of a fashionable dealer in the Champs Elysées, would inspect his whole stock of horses, and inquiring the price of the least valuable animal in the collection, would be told that the horses ranged from 160*l.* upwards. Wishing the proprietor of these valuable animals good morning, Mr. Fudge would next enter the establishment of a horse-jobber, and finding out of a score or so of hacks that there was not one that would even appear likely to do, would leave this gentleman still with a sanguine heart. He would then perhaps accost the driver of one of those carriages which stand under doorways all over Paris, and which nobody ever seems to want, and would ask the man where he and his fraternity went when *they* wanted to buy a horse. The fly-driver would probably send him to some place, very hard to find, at the opposite extremity of Paris, where he would be introduced into a stable full of those wonderful white horses which draw the Paris omnibuses. Here, after narrowly escaping being kicked to pieces, stamped to

pieces, bitten to pieces, by these animals, who are many degrees more untamed than any of the beasts who are called wild, and are shown through bars to the public in menageries, after being half maddened with the neighings and yellings of these tremendous quadrupeds, Mr. Fudge would, perhaps, find some one specimen more calm and reasonable than the rest, and would so far commit himself as to agree to try it on a future day. Then on the future day he and Mr. Pinchbold, mounted on a high gig, with the horse-dealer's head groom standing behind and looking between them at the horse's ears, *would* try the horse, who would probably conduct himself in so outrageous a manner in the Paris streets, that the two gentlemen were very glad when they got safe back to the stables, and so that affair would terminate with a fee to the groom and an expression of regret on Mr. Fudge's part that the horse did not appear to be quite suited to his purpose.

CHAPTER X.

THE CARRIOLE ARRIVES AT PARIS, AND THE PROSPECTS OF THE TRAVELLERS BEGIN TO BRIGHTEN CONSIDERABLY. A NEW AND VERY REMARKABLE CHARACTER IS INTRODUCED TO THE READER.

If Mr. Fudge had not written to the coachmaker with whom the carriole had been left in charge, requesting him to send that vehicle by railroad to Paris without delay; if this step had not been taken, there really seems some reason to doubt whether the same hopelessness which came over him and his friend at Amiens, might not have got possession of them at Paris also. For it did not seem much more easy to get a horse at the last-named place than at the first.

The great step of sending for the carriole, however, was taken. One morning a letter arrived from the coachmaker, in which he acknowledged the receipt of the remittance enclosed by Mr. Fudge for the housing of the carriole. Next he begged to state that he had forwarded that vehicle to the station of the Chemin de Fer du Nord, whence it would be despatched by slow train to Paris. Finally, the coachmaker took the liberty of remarking that the carriole would be at Paris as soon as his letter; and he concluded by requesting that Mr. Fudge would accept the assurance of the distinguished sentiments with which he remained, &c.

The goods station of a great railroad is, perhaps, one of the most uninviting combinations of bricks, timber, trucks, cranes, and general desolation which is to be found even in these days when the institutions just named are to be met with under so many conditions of abomination, turn where we will. It was quite late in the afternoon before Mr. Fudge, who had had a busy day of it, started, with the coachmaker's letter in his hand for the goods station of the Great Northern Railway of France, It was an immense way off, miles beyond the passenger station, miles beyond the Barrière, beyond the Faubourg, beyond everything. When Mr. Fudge at last reached the station, he prowled for some time about among its sheds and outhouses, and walked up and down and here and there, among barren tracts of cinders, and along lines of rusty rails, which seemed to have been laid down in much greater profusion than there was any necessity for. He did this partly because he could not screw himself up to the proper degree of toughness of nerve requisite for an interview with foreign officials, and partly from a curious desire which he felt to see for himself whether the carriole had arrived.

Ah, there it was, in a deserted corner at the end of the rustiest line of rails, perched up high upon a truck, and wearing a helpless and disconsolate look enough. Mr. Fudge went up to it, and peered into the inside. Yes, there was everything intact; there were the cushions, there was Bijou's harness, there were the bells that used to jingle round her fair white neck. There, too, was the stone water-bottle used for that great roadside tea-making. Nay, there was

one of the tea-mugs sticking out of the pocket, and some old candle-ends belonging to the carriage lamps.

"And now you're come," said Mr. Fudge, addressing the helpless vehicle, "I don't know what I'm to do with you. I have nowhere to house you, no horse to put between your shafts, nor, as far as I can see, any prospect of one."

"They can supply you with a horse here if you want to move it," said a voice immediately behind Mr. Fudge. The words were spoken in perfectly good English, but with that peculiar and somewhat vulgar familiarity which always characterizes the English of a Frenchman of the lower class. Mr. Fudge was a little startled at finding that his address to the carriole had been overheard.

"Have you got your order for the delivery of the carriage?" asked the official; "if so, you can take it away at once."

Mr. Fudge was obliged to acknowledge that he had not yet acquired the proper document. To procure this took so long, and necessitated the going into so many offices, and the performance of so many rites and ceremonies—none of which, by the bye, had the effect of filling Mr. Fudge's purse—that it at last got quite dark before all was done, and Mr. F. had to request permission to leave the carriole where it was for the night, saying that he would send for it the first thing in the morning. On his way home, Mr. Fudge called at the house of a certain livery-stable keeper, who lived not far from the hotel, and gave him directions to fetch the carriole away from the station early next day.

And where was Mr. Pinchbold all this time? Mr. Pinchbold had gone to pay a visit to Mazard.

And who or what was Mazard?

It happened that one evening, some time after their arrival at Paris, and about the period of the events narrated in the last chapter, our two friends were taking an after-dinner walk about the town, when, as they were passing down one of its smaller thoroughfares, they happened to notice a dog of the same kind as that which we have seen in the sketch of M. Morve, the veterinary surgeon of Malaise, though somewhat different in colour from that faithful ally of their medical acquaintance. The dog was standing on the extreme edge of the pavement with his back to the houses—the shop behind him being, it should be stated, a pastrycook's. Our friends were walking in the road and not on the pavement, in deference to an earnest request of Mr. Pinchbold, for whom the midnight assassin lurked in every dark-looking doorway; so, as they were in the middle of the road, and the dog was standing with his face turned in that direction, he was rather a conspicuous object, and Mr. Fudge, whose partiality for animals verged on insanity, instantly uttered the masonic signal, which consists, as everybody knows, of three words spoken in the minor key or falsetto.

"Good little dog!" said Mr. Fudge.

The dog instantly responded to Mr. Fudge's salutation, and signalized his appreciation of the attention paid to him by executing a kind of dance peculiar to dogs of the species to which he belonged—a dance almost entirely executed by the fore-legs, the hinder extremities remaining almost stationary.

"What a sociable beast!" said Mr. Fudge.

He was a very odd dog to look at. His colour was in the main dirty white, but his two upright ears were of a tan or yellowish tint, and there were one or two spots of the same colour on other parts of his body. He was very fat, his fur was very thick and soft, his brush of a tail tightly curled up upon his back, and his eyes of the most eloquent description conceivable. There was a curious expression about his mouth, caused by the projection of one of his under teeth, which made him appear as if he was always smiling.

Mr. Fudge having engaged in a brief conversation with this animal, having asked him how he was, whether he was not a very nice dog, and a few other questions, to all of which he received satisfactory replies, tore himself away from the society of this fascinating animal, and went on his way, accompanied by his companion. The dog seemed, however, singularly unwilling to part from his new friends. He jumped about them, followed them, barked about their heels, and then ran on in front of them and looked back with the strangest expression of interest conceivable. In fact, he followed them in this way to the end of the street, and stood there till they were out of sight, looking wistfully after them.

"What a very singular animal!" said Mr. Fudge; "one would say that he wanted something."

"I trust he is not insane," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, gloomily.

It so happened that, on the evening of which we are now speaking, our two friends were, contrary to their usual custom, returning by the way by which they came. They had no sooner entered the bye-

street in which their interview with the sociable dog had taken place, than this strange animal burst out upon them again, and began dancing and barking round them precisely as before.

An old woman looked out of an upper window, and addressing the dog by the name of "Mazard," said something to him in a semi-reproachful tone. Neither Mr. Fudge nor his friend heard what she said, though it seemed to both of them that the expression "un sous" occurred more than once in the course of her address. "Mazard," which was evidently the dog's name, became less importunate in his attentions after the old lady's expostulation, but he still followed them at a little distance, and still looked wistfully after them till they disappeared.

"What a *very* singular dog!" said Mr. Fudge, again.

"I begin to think that he is insane," answered Mr. Pinchbold.

The next day the mystery became still more complicated. Our travellers, passing down the street in which Mazard resided, found that remarkable animal in a violent state of excitement, caused apparently by the proceedings of an old gentleman in a military dress, who kept chinking a piece of money of some kind upon the pavement, alternately letting it go and then snatching it up again just when Mazard, who followed all his movements, was advancing his paw towards it. Two or three bystanders appeared to be enjoying the joke, whatever it was, in no way surprised, however, at the peculiar nature of the pastime in which Mazard and the old officer were engaged. The military gentleman presently restored the piece

of money to his pocket, the bystanders walked off, and Mazard was left looking rather disconsolate in the middle of the road. He had now leisure to observe the presence of the two Englishmen, which he had no sooner done than he came capering up to them, and stood staring in their faces with the same inquiring expression which they had taken note of before.

"Do you know," said Mr. Fudge, looking steadily at his companion with the air of a man who is about to propound a theory which he does not expect to be believed—"do you know that I actually believe that this dog is asking for a sous."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Pinchbold; "what could he do with a sous if he had it? the sons of men alone tear each other to pieces for these rascal counters. The sons of men—"

"Never mind about the sons of men," said Mr. Fudge, "but mark the result of an experiment I am going to make. The old woman at the window last night said something about a sous. The old officer this evening was tantalizing the dog by alternately offering him one of those coins and withdrawing it just as Mazard was going to seize it. From all this I draw my own inferences."

Mr. Fudge now proceeded to put his hypothesis to a practical test. First of all he unbuttoned his coat. Mazard became intensely excited, and shifted his fore-legs from side to side. Mr. Fudge put his hand into his left trousers pocket. Mazard began to jump backwards and forwards. Mr. Fudge rattled half a dozen sous that were in his pocket. Mazard jumped more buoyantly than ever, uttering at intervals a

short bark of delight. Mr. Fudge looked at Mr. Pinchbold in triumph, and Mr. Pinchbold looked at Mr. Fudge in consternation.

"You see there is no doubt about it," said Mr. Fudge, as he took a sous out of his pocket and extended it towards the dog. Mazard instantly took the coin into his mouth, and to all appearance swallowed it.

Directly that Mazard had got the sous, which he had been soliciting so eagerly, into his mouth, his whole appearance and conduct underwent a great change, and, from being violently and unreasonably excited, he instantly became the most perfectly calm, and even apathetic animal that ever was seen. He took no more notice of the two friends, and began moving about, snuffing and smelling hither and thither, just like other and less gifted dogs. So that our two Englishmen, after lingering and watching him some time, concluded that there was an end of the entertainment, and began to move off. It happened, however, that as they did so Mr. Pinchbold looked back.

"Mazard is going back into the shop," said he, arresting his companion. Mr. Fudge looked round just in time to see this eccentric animal pushing violently at the shop door with his nose. He at last managed to get the door open, and entering immediately, was lost to sight. Our two friends immediately retracing their steps, and looking through the glass door of the shop, beheld the explanation of the mystery about which they had been so much troubled.

The extraordinary and gifted animal, as showmen say,

whose proceedings we have thus minutely described, was now trotting up and down the interior of the shop, which the reader will remember was a pastry-cook's, and was endeavouring apparently to attract the attention of a young woman behind the counter engaged in serving a customer. The whole carriage and demeanour of the dog was sufficiently remarkable. His head was thrown back, his tail was in the air, and his movements were characterized by a peculiar kind of strut of great and conscious importance. At times, too, he would utter a peculiar crowing sound, such as one does not usually identify with the lungs of the canine species. It was some time before the woman behind the counter was able to pay any attention to the dog; but when her customer was at length disposed of, she came round at once to where the dog was, in the central part of the shop between the two counters.

"What, Mazard," she said, "hast thou got a sous?" and she stooped down and held her hand open under the dog's mouth. This seemed to be, however, only an established form understood by both parties. Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold, gazing into the shop with eager curiosity, saw the dog deliberately shake his head with an air that said plainly, "No, no, I'm not going to give it up like that, and you know that as well as I do." After which he recommenced his course up and down the shop, crowing away more vain-gloriously than ever. "Very well," said the young woman, "delivery before payment is your rule, isn't it?" and she took a peculiar sort of sponge-cake, of which there were several upon a tray on the counter, holding it out towards the dog with her

right hand, and placing as before her left hand under his mouth.

The dog instantly dropped Mr. Fudge's sous into her palm, and, snatching the cake out of her hand, trotted off in high glee into the back shop to enjoy it by himself.

Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold turned themselves about, and gazed mutely in each other's countenances in speechless astonishment. They remained thus for the space of two minutes, at the expiration of which time they faced about once more and rushed tumultuously, and by common consent, into the pastry-cook's shop.

"The history of that dog!" shrieked Mr. Fudge, who was the first to enter.

"That dog and his history!" yelled Mr. Pinchbold from the steps outside.

The woman behind the counter was obviously not unaccustomed to inquiries relating to her dog, but she seemed a little taken aback by the extremely energetic nature of the curiosity of the two Englishmen.

"Ah, Monsieur," she said, "Mazard is the apple of our eyes, and the astonishment of all who behold him. The talent of which you have just been a witness has only however recently been developed in him, and what is more extraordinary, the trick was a thing of his own discovery, and was not taught him, as far as we know, by any living soul."

"And how did it originate, then?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"It originated thus," answered the woman. "One of our customers, a lady who lives close by, was

making some purchases here, and in paying for what she had, she happened to drop a sous out of her change. When she stooped down to look for it, it was nowhere to be found. 'It is singular, too,' she said; 'I am certain I dropped it, and yet I can nowhere see it.' We all helped to look for it, and Mazard even, who was standing by, snuffed about as dogs will, as if he too were assisting in the search. 'It is only a sous lost,' said the lady; 'so much the worse for the beggars.'

"Well, sir, a little time after the lady was gone, our attention was attracted by the peculiar behaviour of Mazard, who was trotting up and down the shop in a state of great excitement, and uttering a peculiar kind of cry, such as a cat will make over her kitten, as you heard to-day.

"For some time we did not take much notice of him, but at last my mother, who happened to be in the shop, and who is very fond of the dog, went to him and began talking to him, 'What is the matter, Mazard?' she said; 'what ails thee, my dog?' and then she took one of those sponge cakes from the counter, it being her habit now and then, on rare occasions, to give one of them when it had got quite stale and was no longer saleable, to her favourite.

"What was her astonishment, when Mazard instantly dropped a sous out of his mouth as if in payment for the cake, and then began romping and tearing round the shop as you have seen him to-day, as if in a state of ecstasy at his own cleverness.

"This, gentlemen, is all," the woman said, in conclusion, "positively all that we know about the matter. After that day, when the thing came to be talked

about, our friends and customers would give the dog a sous to try him, and by-and-by it got known out of doors, and all sorts of people would give Mazard a five-centime piece to see what he would do with it. Always with the same result. He always goes through exactly the same performance that you have seen, and has never altered a bit since the first day when he showed his accomplishment.

"But oh, sir," the woman said, interrupting herself in her admiration of her favourite, "if you knew what that dog is as I do! If you knew his honesty. Why we have left those cakes which he is so fond of about on the floor to try him, and he will not touch one of them. He will not accept a two-sous cake either, if we offer it to him in exchange for his sous; nor will he take one of those which he always buys as a gift, unless he has the money to pay for it. See," she continued, "Mazard—Mazard," and she held out to him one of his favourite cakes.

The dog, who had been listening attentively to the recent conversation, and who appeared to have derived much gratification from the honourable mention of his name which had occurred in it, instantly obeyed his mistress's call, but declined to take the proffered cake. Of course, Mr. Pinchbold gave him a sous on the spot, and of course he laid it out instantly in his chosen delicacy.

"And has he ever been known to go through this performance elsewhere?" inquired Mr. Fudge.

"Never," answered the woman; "and I am persuaded," (she always spoke of the dog as if he was a customer) "that he would rather starve than deal at any other shop than his own."

Of course Mazard, and his extraordinary performance were the subject of much conversation between Mr. Fudge and his companion; and of course there was much speculation as to how far the statement of his mistress was to be relied on.

"I see no reason," said Mr. Fudge, "to doubt it; there seems to me nothing beyond canine intellect in the process of thought implied by what we have just seen. This dog passes his whole time in a certain place, where he sees, all day long, certain articles of food handed over to those who apply for them, whilst in every case he sees also that a certain circular piece of metal is given in exchange for those articles of food. Is it too much to suppose that the dog would learn at last to think that if he could become possessed of one of those pieces of metal, he would have a right to one of those cakes in which his inmost heart delighted?"

Mr. Pinchbold shook his head, and intimated vaguely, that he was disposed to take a supernatural view of the whole affair. The fact is, that this worthy gentleman was ruminating in his own mind over a project which kept him silent throughout the whole evening which succeeded the visit of the two friends to the pastry-cook's shop. The next morning he could contain it no longer.

"Fudge," he said, smiting the breakfast table with his fist, "I must have him."

"Have who?" asked Mr. Fudge.

"Mazard," replied Mr. Pinchbold, and with that he proceeded to develop to his astonished companion, all the advantages that would accrue to them from such an addition to the travelling party. "Think,"

he said, "what a safeguard he would be in times of danger, and what an amusement in moments of ennui."

Mr. Fudge, on recovering from his first surprise, was entirely favourable to his friend's proposal. He was, however, not altogether sanguine about his chances of getting Mazard away from his present possessors.

"Your only chance," he said, "arises from the fact that there is no man in the case. A Frenchwoman may be fond of a dog, but she will be fonder of a hundred francs; so it is just possible that a hundred francs may do it."

"I would willingly give them," said Mr. Pinchbold; "it is only," he added, true to his favourite delusion, "it is only sticking to it a little harder at Westminster Hall, when we get back."

Negotiations were opened the same day with Mazard's proprietress. At the first mention of the idea of parting with the dog, the young lady in the shop became an outraged individual, and the old lady upstairs, who came down on purpose to hear what was going on, caught the dog up in her arms and swore he should never leave the house.

Mr. Pinchbold had confided the whole Mazard transaction to his friend Mr. Fudge, Mr. P. himself having certain disqualifications for making bargains of rather a serious kind. He was always, to begin with, in a violent hurry to bring the affair, whatever it might be, to a close. He always offered too much to start with, and when his offer was accepted became deeply and, let us add, publicly penitent. But what was the worst thing of all was this, that when by any

chance the owner of any object which he desired contented himself with demanding the proper price for it, he invariably turned round at once to his friend, exclaiming, "By heavens, Fudge, how extraordinarily cheap!" So Mr. Pinchbold was considered a bad hand at making a bargain.

Mr. Fudge, on the contrary, who was, as we have elsewhere hinted, a profound economist, and great on the subject of finance, was a very good hand at a bargain. He saw in a moment the plan to be adopted in the present case, and quietly remarking that he was sorry they would not part with the dog, he added as he left the shop, "that if Mazard's owner should chance to change her mind, there was a gentleman staying at the Hotel du Helder, who would give a hundred francs for the dog."

Mr. Pinchbold passed the whole of the day on which Mr. Fudge had thus opened negotiations for the purchase of Mazard, in a state of great agitation and alarm, and it was as much as his friend could do to prevent him from rushing off to the patissier's to offer a much larger sum than that which Mr. Fudge had mentioned.

Now it happened, fortunately for Mr. Pinchbold's peace of mind, that in the same street in which Mazard's pastry-cook resided, there was another shop of a precisely similar kind, but more recently established. It happened, also, that between this shop and Mazard's a great antagonism existed, and that between the proprietress of the opposition shop and the proprietress of Mazard's shop there was an amount of rivalry which extended beyond commercial limits, and touched upon the affairs of private life to

such an extent that there was scarcely an article of food or a piece of furniture purchased by the opposition lady the like of which or, if possible, the superior, was not instantly ordered by Mazard's mistress. It happened then, most fortunately for Mr. Pinchbold, that the moment at which he made his offer was one when the owner of the gifted animal which Mr. Pinchbold coveted was very much in want of a good round sum of money. It was only on the Sunday before that offer was made, that the fiend at the opposition shop had issued forth on her way to Mass in an entirely new rig from head to foot, and that of so aggravating and gorgeous a description, comprising such unattainable altitude of bonnet, such outrageous wealth of breadths in the skirt, such amplitudes of silk in the basquine, as had caused Mazard's mistress to retire to her sleeping apartment, where she flung herself upon her bed and upon her best bonnet, which happened to be reposing there, and required to know of her destiny when it would be weary of tormenting her, and how much longer the career of that brazen wretch at No. 45 bis, was to go on unchecked?

This access of despair was followed by a period of calm reflection as to how by the next Sunday she should herself become provided with a suit of clothes equal, if not superior, to that in which 45 bis had blazed forth that very day. The business was not hers but her mother's, and the good old lady kept a keen look-out on its proceeds. What was to be done?

Things were at this point then, and the week had advanced no farther than the Tuesday succeeding the Sunday on which 45 bis had triumphed, when the

offer of Mr. Pinchbold, as above related, came in the very nick of time. It was her affair, too; the business was her mother's, but the dog was her own to do what she liked with.

On the very evening, then, of the day on which this offer was made, and just as they were about to issue forth from the hotel, Mr. Fudge was informed that a young woman was without, wishing to speak with the English gentleman who wanted a dog. Mr. Pinchbold happened at the moment to be in Mr. Fudge's room, waiting till he was ready to go out, but he no sooner heard this announcement than he instantly rushed out on to the landing in a state of violent excitement. He was closely followed by his friend, who was afraid to leave him lest he should commit himself in the matter of the bargain. Nor were his apprehensions without some foundation. Mr. Fudge found that not only had Mazard's proprietress come herself, but she had also brought the dog with her, and Mr. Pinchbold was politely thanking her for her readiness to oblige him in parting with so priceless a treasure for so small a sum.

The fair patissière seemed to think this a good moment for broaching some new and rather startling views of her own on the subject of the present transaction. She began by remarking that although they saw her there and the dog with her, she yet felt undecided on the subject of parting with him. Mr. Pinchbold looked suddenly chop-fallen, and Mazard, who was smelling that gentleman's shin as if with a view to ascertain whether it was the shin of one whom he would like for a master, desisted from that occupation and became attentive to business. She felt,

the lady continued, that to part with Mazard would break her heart—Mr. Pinchbold sighed heavily—and that of her aged mother. The dog, however, was her, the speaker's, property; her mother had no control over it. Mr. Pinchbold brightened up. At this point the young lady diverged into a statement of some length as to the likelihood of her own and her mother's recovery from such a blow as the loss of Mazard would prove to them. A statement which ended in her taking a very desponding view of the case, and intimating at last that though she had little hope on the subject, she happened to be in want of a sum of money, and that she would be disposed to risk her own happiness and her mother's if Mr. Fudge's friend was disposed on his part to double his previous offer, and give two hundred francs instead of one hundred for the dog.

Mr. Pinchbold sprung off his seat, for there was a bench covered with green velvet on the landing where this scene took place, and was about to speak when Mr. Fudge seized him by the arm—a proceeding which caused Mazard to bark violently, as if he were already prepared to resent any rough treatment to which Mr. P. might be subjected—Mr. Fudge, we say, seized his friend by the arm, and walked him straight off to his own room.

"If you stir from this apartment," said Mr. Fudge, "till you hear me whistle 'Rule Britannia,' I will not move another step in this transaction; and Mazard, depend upon it, will never be yours."

With these words Mr. F. closed the door upon his friend and returned once more to the charge. The discussion that followed was a long one. Of all the

obstinate young women that France could produce, the patissière appeared to be the very flower and cream. At length came that inevitable moment in French bargaining when one or other of the parties makes a move towards breaking up the interview. Mr. Fudge, rising from the settee, remarked that it was an uncomfortable spot for conversational purposes, and that, therefore, he would not venture, as they could not come to terms, to detain the young lady any longer. The owner of Mazard, at this hint, of course prepared to depart; lingering, however, a moment, she remarked that it was always her wish to be as agreeable as possible. Mr. Fudge replied that it was not only her wish, but as far as he could judge, her invariable practice. The young lady, who had descended one step—Mazard, who had used up the whole affair, was half-way down stairs—the young lady re-ascended the stair, and said that if a concession of twenty-five francs would arrange it, she was ready to accept one hundred and seventy-five. Mr. Fudge regretted that his friend could only give a hundred. His friend was a stern and ferocious character, and he dared not propose giving more to him. At this the young lady once more took her departure, and Mazard was heard barking in the street.

Mr. Fudge was just getting his mouth into the requisite shape for whistling "Rule Britannia" as a signal that the affair was over, when the voice of the patissière was heard once more upon the staircase. A vision of 45 bis had risen up before her, and in the agony caused her by this apparition she yielded one step more. Positively, for the last time, she had just this one more thing to say. It was a day of

great concessions, and to get the affair off her mind she would accept one hundred and fifty francs.

Mr. Fudge was inexorable. He had been empowered to offer a hundred francs, his friend was a demon of obstinacy, and there was an end of the affair.

Indeed; it appeared as if it were likely to prove so. The young lady flounced down the stairs, and forgetting her desire to be agreeable, gave vent to some of those remarks with regard to the English nation, which are invariably called forth whenever its representatives object to fulfil their proper destiny on the continent, and decline to be cheated.

The affair, then, was over. Mr. Fudge whistled "Rule Britannia," and Mr. Pinchbold emerged from his retreat.

"Well!" he exclaimed.

"All right," answered Mr. Fudge.

"Have you got the dog?" asked Mr. Pinchbold.

"No," replied Mr. Fudge.

"Then how is it all right?" inquired his friend, eagerly.

"Because," answered Mr. Fudge, "if you will give her time enough she will come round."

"She will not," said Mr. Pinchbold.

"Where are you going?" said Mr. Fudge, catching at his friend's arm.

Mr. Pinchbold made no answer; he burst from his companion's grasp, and commenced descending the stairs at a pace which rendered pursuit useless. Mr. Fudge returned to his room, and unlocking his desk, placed a formidable array of pens, ink, and paper upon the table.

"At all events," he said to himself, "we'll have it down in black and white."

It was not long before Mr. Pinchbold returned with the patissière and Mazard at his heels. He had found them, he said, fortunately standing just outside the door of the hotel.

The young lady remarked that she was waiting for a fiacre. She was now all smiles and politeness once more; for it is a characteristic of French bargains that the same person who has treated you with malignant detestation during the progress of the transaction, becomes the most amiable of individuals directly the affair is concluded, and the enemy's gold about to pass into his pocket.

And the affair *was* concluded. In the brief interval which had elapsed between Mr. Pinchbold's descent of the staircase and his re-ascent of it in company with the patissière, he had learnt the lady's final decision on the subject of the purchase, and had given his consent thereto.

"This is the last bargain I will conduct for you," said Mr. Fudge to his friend. But he did not mean a word he said.

There remained still much to be settled, the great difficulty being, of course, with Mazard himself. How was he to be persuaded to change owners? It really seemed a positive insult to the animal to ask him to abandon the pastrycook's shop; and it must not be concealed that both Mr. Fudge and his friend felt almost ashamed of taking him away from the sphere to which he seemed so legitimately to belong. The patissière was of opinion—and Mr. Fudge entirely agreed with her—that it would be perfectly

impossible for them to have possession of the dog while they remained in Paris; indeed, they would have to keep a sharp look-out upon him, she thought, even after they had left that city. Mr. Pinchbold was too much occupied in feeding his new purchase with lumps of sugar from the tea-basket to enter into this discussion, but he at once saw the truth of this view of the case.

"For heaven's sake, then," said he, "let us leave Paris at once, and get it over, for"—he had got wonderfully canine all at once—"I can't get on without my dog."

It was at length arranged, as the only feasible plan, that Mazard was to be looked upon as Mr. Pinchbold's property, but that he was to remain in his own quarters till Mr. P. left Paris; that gentleman having the right to go to the pastrycook's whenever he liked in the meantime, and to take every measure he could to win the dog's affection, or, at least, to get him well accustomed to his presence, so that, when the great moment for his final kidnapping should take place, the dog might feel that he had a friend to fall back upon in Francis Pinchbold.

Now came the great money question. The fair patissière suggested that her terms were cash; while Mr. Fudge contended equally strongly for payment on delivery. Mr. Pinchbold had, of course, once more lapsed altogether out of the transaction, and was spoken of as if he were in some distant European capital—say Brussels—as "the friend." This discussion about terms was so long and intricate a one that it threatened once more to unsettle the whole affair. The young lady, as the reader knows, wanted

money at once; and Mr. Fudge would not let her have it. At length, and after a great deal of talking, a compromise was effected, and Mr. Fudge yielded so far as to agree to give half the purchase-money at once, and the other half when his friend should become possessed of the dog. The patissière, feeling that with seventy-five francs down, and another seventy-five in near prospect, she could obtain all the requisite means of crushing her enemy, consented to these terms, and gave her signature to the following document:—

"I, the undersigned, have received from Francis Pinchbold, barrister-at-law, the sum of seventy-five francs, being half the purchase-money for a white Pomeranian dog, with tan ears, and otherwise marked with the same colour; which dog I hereby pledge myself to deliver over to him, on payment of the second half of the entire sum of one hundred and fifty francs, for which amount I sell and make over the said dog, whose name is Mazard, to the said Francis Pinchbold, barrister-at-law, as aforesaid.

(Signed) "HORTENSE LOUISE PILYSER."

From that time Mr. Pinchbold was for ever rushing off to the pastrycook's shop. Indeed, he was there so often, and for such long periods, that he got at last to be looked upon as one of the establishment, and Mr. Fudge, going there in search of him one day, met him coming up the stairs from the bakehouse with a tray of jam tarts, which he was carrying with the object, as he said, of making Mazard believe that he was part and parcel of the concern. For the rest,

the dog really seemed to know and appreciate his new master, and would follow him down a street or two every time he left the shop.

But all this, of course, only made Mr. Pinchbold more anxious to possess his favourite altogether, and made him look forward more eagerly every day to the time of their quitting Paris.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH YET ANOTHER CHARACTER DESTINED TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN THESE PAGES COMES UPON THE SCENE; AND IN WHICH THERE REALLY SEEMS A CHANCE OF "THE CRUISE" BEING RESUMED AFTER ALL.

At last there came a morning when Mr. Fudge, uttering the well-known formula in a more decisive tone than usual, said—

"Now, I'll tell you what, Pinchbold. I propose that we do make just one more attempt, which shall *really* and *positively* be the last. I propose that we do now—what, probably, it would have been better if we had done in the first instance—that we speak to the master of the hotel on the subject of our journey, and ask him if he happens to know of any one who has a horse to sell."

The Hotel du Helder is by no means a "horsey" hotel, and has no stable or stableyard attached to its premises. The owner, on being consulted by Mr. Fudge on the subject mentioned, affirmed candidly enough that it was a thing altogether out of his line, but he said, at the same time, that he had a friend who was engaged in the harness trade, and who always knew—and indeed, made it his business to know—of a variety of horses at all sorts of prices, and possessed of all sorts of qualifications, which happened to be for sale. His friend, he added, was a

good judge of horses, and what was more, was a man for whose integrity and good faith he could vouch. He would see M. Grandal—which was his friend's name—in the course of the day, and if Mr. "Fodge" and his friend wished it, he would acquaint him with their need, and set him to work to supply it. The two friends held a short consultation, and then gratefully accepted their host's offer. They were to have a personal interview with M. Grandal that very evening, at dinner-time.

And now that the affair seemed really once more in train, Mr. Pinchbold was again seized with one of his worst attacks of despondency in connexion with the different sources of apprehension with which the minds of those who had anything to do with horses must, according to him, of necessity be racked. The worthy gentleman spent the day in ruminating on all the numerous forms of accident to which the peculiar nature of their contemplated journey would expose them. When Mr. Fudge came in from walking about the streets of Paris—Mr. Pinchbold having excused himself from accompanying his friend by alleging, as usual, the necessity under which he found himself of writing some "letters on business"—he found his friend surrounded with several sheets of paper, on which he had written, "Paris, Hotel du Helder," and "My dear sir," very symmetrically, and had then, unable, as it appeared, to advance farther, been seized with epistolary paralysis, and betaken himself to the sister art of drawing as a means of occupying his time.

The efforts of Mr. Pinchbold's genius bore evidence, as will sometimes happen with great artists, of the

peculiar condition of his mind at the period of their production, his drawings being representations of certain crises of peril to which those who travel in carrioles are peculiarly liable.

The first of Mr. Pinchbold's designs showed the danger to which such persons would be liable, and the inconveniences to which they would be subject, if they had the ill-luck to meet with a kicking horse.

The second, those to which they would be liable if a runaway animal fell to their share.

The third explained what might result from the purchase of a quadruped given to rearing in the air.

And the fourth, the disastrous ruin which a horse possessing all these characteristics would possibly entail upon the carriole and its occupants.

From such morbid and distressing subjects of contemplation Mr. Fudge aroused his friend, in order to bear him off to the *salle-à-manger* where they were to dine, and where they expected to hear news of their host's friend, M. Grandal.

The *salle-à-manger* was full of people seated at the different tables, either waiting for the dinners they had ordered, or engaged in eating them. There was not one of these persons who was not electrified with astonishment when a thing so unusual as the entrance into the court-yard (on which the windows of the *salle-à-manger* gaze) of a man on horseback took place. Mr. Fudge himself looked up from his soup in surprise at the sound, for neither horse nor carriage had ever entered that yard within his experience, and he had often stayed at the Hotel du Helder.

"How embarrassing for us if it should be——"

"M. Grandal has brought a horse for you to

examine, gentlemen," said the head waiter, in a loud tone, advancing to the table occupied by the two Englishmen.

It is a dreadful thing to relate an act of social treachery on the part of a person whom the reader esteems, as we trust he does Mr. Pinchbold, but truth compels us to state, that at this particular moment he altogether deserted his companion in misfortune, shrouding himself behind a newspaper, and leaving Mr. Fudge, with the gaze of all the eyes belonging to all the guests in the *salle-à-manger* fixed upon him as he marched out of that apartment in obedience to the waiter's summons. It is only justice to Mr. Pinchbold, however, to mention that remorse took possession of him to such an extent after Mr. Fudge's departure, that in a very few moments he cast aside his *Galignani* and followed him.

Mr. Pinchbold found his friend in conversation with a stranger, who, as far as the darkness would allow him to see, appeared to be a young man of about two or three and thirty, of a slight figure, with an intelligent and prepossessing countenance. He was standing by the side of a rather small, but finely formed black horse, from which he had just dismounted.

We find from Mr. Pinchbold's diary that his first impression of this animal was of a favourable nature. "I know nothing about horses," writes Mr. P., "but I fancy I know something of character as externally developed, and I was much struck with the air of intelligence and good humour which pervaded the appearance of the animal submitted to our inspection this day. He seemed to me to have a good eye, with, by the bye, a good notion of using it, for he

was looking round at my friend Fudge, or at me, or at M. Grandal, who brought him, all the time that our interview with that gentleman lasted."

Mr. Fudge was in truth not less satisfied with the appearance of the horse which M. Grandal had brought, than was his friend Mr. Pinchbold. The animal before him stood about fourteen and a half hands, but, owing to the nature of his proportions, he gave the impression of being somewhat larger than he really was. It was a good shape for work, large and deep in the chest, not too long in the leg, and well developed in the muscular system. A critic might have discovered that this horse was a thought too small in the hind quarters, that his haunches were a hair's breadth higher than they ought to be in comparison with the crest, and that—it added, by the bye, very much to his beauty—his hoofs were almost alarmingly small. Altogether he was a comfortable horse to look at, and Mr. Fudge owned to his friend that, if he had listened to the promptings of his inclination, he would have concluded his purchase from the moment when he felt him nibbling at his coat-tails while he was talking to M. Grandal.

Of course, at a first interview, and in the dark, it was quite impossible to conclude anything; so an appointment had to be made next day, for an examination and trial of the horse. This done, M. Grandal got into the saddle once more, and rode out of the court-yard of the hotel. There were some repairs going on in connexion with the pavement of this enclosure, and the men were working by lamp-light. As M. Grandal rode past the spot where these repairs

were going on, the horse started at the lantern which was placed on the ground.

"Ah, I don't like that," said Mr. Pinchbold, who, as well as his friend, was watching the horse as it took its departure.

"There is no horse in the world who would not do as much," Mr. Fudge answered.

"The horse is an awful animal," remarked Mr. Pinchbold, gloomily; and they went in to dinner, the company in the *salle-à-manger*—they had been watching the two friends during their interview with M. Grandal—regarding them with mingled admiration and distrust, just as the idea that they were two milords making arrangements to win a race, or a couple of horse-dealers making a bargain, happened to be predominant in their minds.

The next day enters upon the scene that unbearable character—an old soldier. The old soldier had charge of the horse which M. Grandal had brought to the hotel on the preceding day, and from that horse he was not to be separated. The horse did not belong to *him*, of course; neither did it belong to M. Grandal. Does—it may here be asked—a horse that is for sale ever belong to anybody? There are two transactions in which no principal has ever yet been treated with—the sale of a horse, and a money loan. This old soldier was an awful bore. He was, or professed to be, brother to the horse's real owner, who was said to be a medical man, who was selling his horse because he had had enough of civilized life, and was going to set up in business in Africa. There was an invigorating probability about this story, which, as Mr. Fudge remarked to his friend, made

the transaction in every way satisfactory. However, there the horse was, looking to quite as great advantage in the broad daylight as he had looked in the dusk of the evening. There he was ready to be tried, and there was M. Grandal ready to assert that the animal, which he had known for some years, was a beast which they might depend upon. Now, the two friends had these reasons for relying upon what M. Grandal said. They had perfect confidence in the integrity of the owner of the Hotel du Helder, and he had told them that they might have equal confidence in his friend M. Grandal. In addition to this, they had conceived an agreeable impression of M. Grandal himself from his appearance and behaviour, which had not been diminished by his cautioning them that the old soldier was a scamp, and that they need not listen to a word that he said.

There never was such an aggravating old soldier as that old soldier who had charge of the emigrating surgeon's horse. If he had only been contented with being an old soldier, without for ever dragging the fact that he had been so into the conversation, the thing might have been borne. But he never would let his former profession rest; and, what was more remarkable, he seemed to consider it a kind of guarantee for his present integrity, as if the fact that he had once been a soldier proved to a dead certainty that he was possessed of every virtue, and incapable of any base or treacherous proceeding. He sat beside Mr. Fudge during the trial of the little horse (M. Grandal and Mr. Pinchbold occupying the back seat), and to every question that Mr. Fudge asked, to every doubt which he suggested, opposed this

infernal old soldierhood as an answer, beyond which there was no appeal. Did Mr. Fudge inquire of this gentleman if he was quite sure that the little horse was only six years and a half old, this aggravating individual passionately replied that he was an old soldier; was it likely he would deceive? Did Mr. Fudge again venture on a question as to the animal's lungs, he was again informed that it was not the custom of old soldiers to sell broken-winded horses. This was, then, the answer to every question. Did the horse ever shy?—He was an old soldier. Did it ever stumble?—He was an old soldier. Did it bolt?—He was an old soldier. Was it quiet in the stable?—Old soldier. Easy to harness?—Old soldier. Was it, in fact, sound in wind and limb?—Old soldier.

Mr. Fudge at length got so tired of this answer that he desisted from further questioning, and confined himself to forming such an opinion as he could from the conduct of the horse itself which he was engaged in driving. This was satisfactory enough. They drove through all sorts of crowded streets, up the steep incline of the Rue d'Amsterdam, and down the hill which forms the Rue Blanche. They circulated about the quarter of the Madeleine, and touched upon the Boulevart, returning to the Rue Basse des Ramparts, where M. Grandal resided, after what was upon the whole a very satisfactory excursion.

The friends now required a little time for consultation before they finally decided. This, however, was very distasteful to the old soldier, who remarked that gentlemen in his former profession were in the habit of forming rapid decisions, and acting upon them, in short, like old soldiers. To which Mr. F. replied, that

as he had not the advantage of being an old soldier himself, he preferred looking before he leapt, and that he would give a final answer in the evening. In the course of the afternoon our two friends, in company with M. Grandal, visited a horse belonging to a butcher, which appeared to have every defect which could be compressed into the compass of a single animal; and a horse belonging to a baker, which had no defect at all except an inconvenient propensity, when requested to start, to stand erect upon its hind legs, and paw the air, during a period varying from thirty to thirty-five minutes, at the expiration of which time it was in the habit of bolting, and, having great resources of wind and limb, it never stopped till some insurmountable object arrested its headlong career. Resisting the fascinations of both these animals, concerning which their owners averred, with some truth, that their like was seldom to be met with, our two friends returned to their hotel to hold a last solemn consultation, which ended, as the reader has doubtless anticipated, in their empowering M. Grandal to treat with the old soldier, or with the civilization-wearied surgeon, for the purchase of the little horse.

Of course the sum named by Mr. Fudge as his and his friend's ultimatum was lower than that originally named by him of the African longings. Of course the old soldier swore that no old soldiers ever accepted less than they originally demanded. Of course he strengthened his position by affirming that his brother, though "his boat was on the shore, and his bark was on the sea," and though "his heart was in the desert healing the Arab," would rather forswear his most darling project and return to civiliza-

tion and his one-horse chaise than diminish one franc of the purchase-money originally mentioned. Of course, M. Grandal vowed that his clients did not want to *buy* the horse; and, of course, the old soldier asseverated that he of the Arab yearnings did not want to *sell* the horse. Of course, it never occurred to either party to inquire why, under these circumstances, the transaction should take place at all; and, of course, it ended in the old soldier accepting what Mr. Fudge offered, and being very glad to get it. Let us hope that he handed the proceeds of the sale to his medical brother intact, and that that gentleman may be doing a spanking business at this moment in the great Sahara.

Our two travellers could hardly believe it possible that they were once more possessed of the means of continuing their journey. What, when they had been aground so long, were they to be towed off once more? Was the shattered craft, the wreck of their darling project, to be repaired and refitted with mast and sail, to be set afloat once again, and started in even better trim than at its first launching? Was the CRUISE UPON WHEELS not done with yet?

Ups and downs; an hour of pleasure and an hour of pain; a day of sunshine and a day of rain; hope in the morning, despondency at noon; presently a half despair; a flash of comfort soon—is not this the life we lead? A mingled yarn, a web of black and white.

When Mr. Fudge went to fetch the carriole from the stable where it had been put up, in order that both the horse and the vehicle might be together at a

certain *manége* in the Chaussée D'Antin, which had been strongly recommended to him, it happened that as he and M. Grandal drove back (M. Grandal having the reins) they passed, in the dusk of the evening, a place where the road had been opened, where labourers were throwing earth up in spadesful, the whole being lighted by a flaring jet of gas. When they came opposite this place the little horse was seized with a paroxysm of fear, and flung himself to the other side of the road, executing the most violent and unmistakeable shy from right to left that Mr. Fudge had ever witnessed. The horse was got right again after a short delay, and nothing further happened on the way to the *manége;* but Mr. Fudge was considerably dashed by the prospect that this accident laid open, and he thought of night journeys, of arriving in the dark at strange places, with flashing lights about. He remembered that, according to the map, the railroad ran for miles beside those deserted post roads of France on which they were to travel; and as he thought of these things he almost repented of his purchase. As for M. Grandal, he seemed even more discomposed at what had happened than Mr. Fudge himself; and as they parted it was agreed that there should be a further trial of the horse before the journey was recommenced, and that if there was anything more of the kind they had just seen, M. Grandal would do all in his power to rid them of their newly purchased horse, or to get it exchanged for another.

Mr. Fudge made somewhat light of what had happened in describing it to Mr. Pinchbold; and his account of the accident was very far—as all accounts

are—from conveying in full force the idea of what had occurred.

Along the whole extent of the Champs Elysées, through the barrier, and straight down the long broad road to which it gives access, and then through some iron gates into the Bois de Boulogne, in and out among the smaller alleys which intersect that pretty park throughout, back by the avenue de l'Imperatrice, again through the barrier, and then by the crowded Faubourg St. Honoré — detestable thoroughfare— home. This was the route chosen for the trial trip; and, during the whole time that it lasted, the behaviour of the little horse was, with the exception of certain occasional startings, and a tendency to look askance at certain objects by the roadside, very satisfactory both to Mr. Fudge and M. Grandal, who accompanied him. There remained one more test which it seemed desirable to apply, and this was a night drive in the streets of Paris. The "shy" had occurred in the dark, and was caused by a flaring gaslight, so it occurred to Mr. Fudge that it would be a good thing to try the new horse at night; and see whether he really was especially nervous at that time, and more liable to shy than at others.

About six o'clock, then, on the evening of the 2nd of October, Mr. Fudge, accompanied by his friend, Mr. Pinchbold, who insisted on going with him, in order that he might judge for himself how far the new horse was to be trusted—Mr. Fudge and his friend, we say, set off for an evening drive about the streets of Paris. It was a curious experience, to be driving about that great town by night, and to be threading their way in their rough country vehicle

among the carriages, the fiacres, and omnibuses, which were flashing about in the darkness. Somehow or other this evening drive was a very pleasant one. The behaviour of the little horse was unexceptionable; and when Mr. Fudge had put him to the final test of taking him past the very spot where the great shy had taken place, both gentlemen thought that their new purchase had been tried quite enough; and Mr. Pinchbold was even disposed to rally his companion upon the degree of anxiety he had manifested on this occasion.

"You are getting rather nervous about horses," said Mr. Pinchbold, jauntily, as they descended from the vehicle at the stables. "You must correct that, Fudge."

Mr. Fudge smiled, and the two friends set off in high spirits to Champeaux's, where they were to eat the last dinner which they were to partake of in Paris for some time to come.

For the next day was to be rendered for ever memorable, by the recommencement of their journey. On the next day they were to take their seats in the carriole once more, with their faces turned to Geneva. Surely this was an appetizing thought. M. Champeaux's excellent fare tasted all the better from the sensation experienced by both our friends as they partook of it, that they were to be off the next day, for it is an indispensable part of all perfect enjoyment that the pleasure of which you are partaking should have, outside and beyond it, something in store even better than itself. The schoolboy's Saturday half-holiday would be nothing, if the Sunday at home did not loom brightly beyond it in the distance.

CHAPTER XII.

RATHER A LONG CHAPTER, CONTAINING MUCH IMPORTANT MATTER, AND SHOWING HOW THE TRAVELLERS MADE A NEW START, HOW MAZARD WAS KIDNAPPED, HOW THE LITTLE HORSE BEHAVED, AND HOW MR. PINCHBOLD SAT UP ALL NIGHT.

THE chronicler of this journey, undertaken by the two English gentlemen, whose fortunes we have followed thus far, is so rejoiced to see them again about to start and in a fair way of carrying out their arduous undertaking, that he cannot help expressing a hope that the reader, too, shares his delight, and is glad to find them about, once more, to take the road.

It will be seen by reference to the map of France, that the road is long, and that the space between Paris and Geneva is a considerable one. Our travellers knew nothing of the line of route, and had, indeed, except that one franc map which Mr. Fudge had purchased at Malaise, nothing at all to guide them. Pondering over this sheet, the two friends had come to the conclusion that their plan was to make first of all gradually for Auxerre, approaching it by Corbeil, Fontainebleau, Montereau, Sens, and Joigny. The next point to aim at would be Dijon, situated in the heart of the Cote d'Or. This place would have to be attained by Tonnerre, Ancy le Franc, Montbard. After Montbard the way seemed to become confused, and the

road doubtful, while, beyond Dijon, there seemed more than one course open to them, more than one route for reaching—or not reaching, as the case might be—the great end of their undertaking; the goal which they had set before them as the termination of their course.

So much the map showed them. But there was a great deal the map did *not* show them. It did not show them the nature of the road, the hills that would double the length of a day's journey, and make what seemed a short course on the map, an impossibly long one; these things they had no means of guessing at, and as to that dim, grey shadow which the map-engraver had dotted irregularly on the confines of the department of the Jura, what notion did that give of the difficulties which that mysterious region, marking the line of separation between France and Switzerland, and marking it, too, with so rough a hand, might have in store for them?

Mr. Fudge rose on the morning of Tuesday, the second of October, with—for a man of two-and-thirty—a light heart and a sanguine anticipation of all that this day, and many other days beyond it, had in store. His travelling costume, substituted over night for the more townish garb which it had been necessary to wear at Paris, lay ready to put on, and it was with unfeigned satisfaction that he found himself once more about to assume the heavy boots, the long leather gaiters—the last stained yet with the mud of the previous journey—which, with a loose coat, and an old wide-awake hat, formed a comfortable, if not a fashionable tout ensemble.

Mr. Pinchbold's get up was of a somewhat more

elaborate description, and consisted of a complete shooting costume of one colour, and a cap of that peculiar make which is so often seen in France, and which that military nation has copied from the head-dress ordinarily worn by the soldiers of the Empire —a cap with a horizontal, almost an upturned brim, such as is more especially worn by the Sergens de Ville, of the French metropolis. It was part of Mr. Pinchbold's idea, that it was very desirable that in the course of their journey he and his friend should wear, as much as possible, the appearance of denizens of the French soil, in order that it might not be suspected that they were possessed of those fabulous riches which are ascribed to the English, and a reputation for which might draw down upon them those disasters in the shape of robbery and murder—not to speak of the lesser evils of extortion and cheating—which Mr. Pinchbold was always looking forward to with dread and apprehension. It was with this view, then, that the cap just mentioned had been selected by Mr. Pinchbold as the right and proper head-dress for his journey, and it was with this view also, that the same gentleman had cultivated the small upturned moustache, and the Vandyke beard, with which after much labour he had managed to decorate his countenance. In short, Mr. P. had done all he could to make himself look like a Frenchman, but nature had not fulfilled her part towards carrying out this consummation, and had left his countenance without those marks of low materialism, of avarice and sensuality, which would have helped him better than either cap or beard to perform his assumed part with success.

It has been mentioned in the fourth chapter of this

narrative, in which the original start of our two travellers from Malaise is commemorated, that it was with infinite difficulty that they got off, and that an endless amount of final impediments delayed them at the last moment, so much that they could hardly get off at all. Now, many as were the causes of delay on the occasion of the first setting off of Mr. Fudge and his friend from Malaise, and great as the difficulty was of getting under weigh on that occasion, it was nothing at all in comparison with what they experienced in making a first move away from Paris.

The start was not to be from the hotel, but from M. Grandal's place of business, for Bijou's harness had been removed there in order to be altered so as to fit her successor. The collar was not yet completed, and the different trials of the new horse had been made with a collar borrowed from M. Grandal for the purpose. It was deemed, then, the best plan to drive round by his house, and change the collars there, and it was thought also desirable to send the luggage to the same place, as packing the carriole in the Rue du Helder, and in front of a fashionable hotel, was an undertaking for which neither of our friends felt much inclination.

There was a great deal of packing to do, and very little time and very little space in which to effect it. There was a trunk to be left behind in charge of the maitre d'hôtel, which trunk was to be forwarded after the travellers, if they ever succeeded in reaching Geneva. Then it was necessary to decide what things were to be consigned to this box, and what they actually required to have with them, and any one who has ever had to form this decision for him-

self will be well aware of the agonies of doubt which must be gone through before any certain conclusions on such a subject can be arrived at. To begin with —it is necessary, of course, to put away into the trunk that is left behind everything that we can by any possibility want, leaving out all sorts of impossible objects which no circumstances that can by any means be expected to occur can ever render of the slightest use. It is necessary, also, that the box or valise in which the things to be left behind are placed, should be carefully locked, and strapped or corded into the bargain—it is necessary, we say, that all these things should be, and further, that we should be in a desperate hurry to start, before we shall be able to find out what things we ought—or rather, ought not—to make over to that tremendous instrument of punishment—the trunk which we will have sent after us.

The packing up, then, was a long affair, and it was noon before the porter was despatched to M. Grandal's with the luggage. The next thing to do was to go in search of the carriole, but even this was not effected without delay. The carriole and horse were put up at a certain *manége*, or riding-school, the owner of which, having a great deal of business on his hands, was increasing his stock of horses. This gentleman had cast an eye of favour upon the quadruped belonging to our two travellers, and had distinctly hinted at his readiness to purchase it if they felt inclined to sell, and his still greater readiness to offer in exchange for the little horse, a great lumbering brute of his own, which he affirmed was better suited to their purpose. Now, Mr. Fudge and his friend were

getting, on the subject of horses and everything connected with them, exceedingly suspicious and mistrustful. When Mr. F., therefore, found that this equestrian gentleman was so sweet upon their recent purchase, it occurred to him that if the riding-master knew when the start was to take place, he might play some trick or other with the little horse, unfitting him for the journey that he might keep him himself, and then suggest his own overgrown beast as a substitute. So our two friends resolved to say nothing at all about their journey till the very moment of their departure.

The consequence of this extraordinary, but perhaps excusable, degree of suspiciousness was, that when our travellers arrived at the *manége*, they found nothing in readiness for them. The horses in the stables had not yet had their midday feed, and as the travellers meant to drive straight to Corbeil without stopping *en route*, it was necessary that their horse should have his oats before starting. They had to wait a long time for this. All the horses were fed in rotation, and theirs must wait till his turn came. Then, of course, some time was consumed in the act of eating, and more again in that of harnessing and putting to.

The next thing to do was to pay the bill, and then the riding-master, being made aware of their intended departure, was very urgent in his representations of the unfitness for purposes of travelling of their own horse, and of the singular suitableness of his own animal for a long and fatiguing journey. Our travellers were, however, deaf to these amiable suggestions, and left their kind adviser calling after them that if they saw cause to alter their decision and return, he would at any time buy their little horse of

them, or give them the Gross Bay, as the animal was called, in exchange for it.

At M. Grandal's everything was in readiness. Indeed, throughout every part of every transaction in which this gentleman had a hand, there ran a punctuality and straightforwardness which left nothing to be desired. He promised nothing that he did not perform. He undertook nothing that he did not carry through. Such qualities as these of M. Grandal's must needs have come out with an especial brilliancy when compared with the roguery and deceit which our travellers had been accustomed to find invariably mixed up with all matters in which that noble animal, the horse, had any share. Also had Mr. Fudge conceived in his own mind the idea of offering some little tribute at parting to these excellent and rare characteristics of his new acquaintance.

In the courtyard which lay at the back of M. Grandal's premises, our travellers found, to begin with, the porter waiting with their luggage, and a little group, consisting of M. Grandal himself, his brother, and a stranger whom neither Mr. Fudge nor his friend had seen before. This person was introduced to them by M. Grandal in the capacity of one who, having formerly been a Government courier, was well acquainted with the road to Switzerland, and able to afford them any information they might want. Mr. Fudge lost no time in consulting the ex-courier on their line of route. Mr. F. traced it correctly enough as far as Dijon, but beyond that place it appeared that there were two roads, between which it would be necessary to choose. One which, stretching away to the south by Beaune, Chalons,

and Macon, would conduct them to Geneva, but by a long and circuitous road. The other, by Dole and Poligny, which went straight to the mark, but over a more mountainous line of country than the other. The courier shook his head when Mr. Fudge spoke of following this last route, and said that he thought by the time they had had a taste of the Val de Suzon, which lay just before Dijon, they would be inclined to have as little to do with mountains as possible. This man seemed, altogether, disposed to take rather a gloomy view of the undertaking, and spoke of the mountains of the Jura as of obstacles, the full force of which the travellers had little idea of. Altogether, the assembled party was not a cheerful one. M. Grandal adverted once again to the formidable shy which had taken place in the streets of Paris, and said that it had cost him much uneasiness since. His brother suggested the precaution of driving, at first at any rate, with double reins, which Mr. Fudge adopted, and the ex-courier said—

"So you intend crossing the Jura in a Flemish carriole, and with one unassisted horse."

"We intend to try," answered Mr. Fudge.

The luggage was now secured in its place. The new collar had been substituted for the borrowed one, the double reins had been adjusted, and everything was ready at last for a move. Mr. Fudge took the opportunity to draw M. Grandal aside, and expressed in a few words his sense of the obligation he and his friend were under for the services M. Grandal had rendered them.

It has been mentioned in describing Mr. Fudge's travelling costume that it was not characterized by

any very great splendour of decoration. If it had been added that his appearance verged on the seedy, it would not have conveyed a false impression to the reader. Nay, it is even questionable whether if you had gone the length of asserting that this good gentleman's attire was extremely shabby you would have spoken in stronger language than the fact justified. There was but one decorative feature in his whole costume, it was a small horse-shoe pin that held together the neckcloth with which his red flannel shirt was girt about where it came in contact with his throat. Mr. Fudge's fingers were fidgeting about this little trinket as he spoke to M. Grandal.

"I thank you with all my heart," said Mr. Fudge, "in behalf of my friend and myself, not only for the great trouble you have bestowed on our affair, but still more for the real interest which you have manifested in it throughout."

M. Grandal would not hear a word. He had done nothing. He only hoped that the horse might turn out tolerably suited to their purpose.

"And now," said Mr. Fudge, in conclusion, and taking the horse-shoe out of his cravat, "I have to ask you to do me one favour more."

"No, no," said M. Grandal, who saw what he was at.

"You must accept, forgiving its little worth, this small token of gratitude."

"No, no," said M. Grandal, again, "I have done nothing, I can receive no reward."

"No reward was dreamt of," urged Mr. Fudge.

"No, no; no, no," reiterated M. Grandal again.

"You may refuse," said Mr. Fudge, "to accept a

reward, but you cannot," he added, sticking the pin into M. Grandal's cravat, "you cannot reject what is offered you as a friend."

The horse-shoe remained where Mr. Fudge had placed it, and that gentleman jumped hastily into the carriole, and took his place by Mr. Pinchbold, who was already seated.

"Au revoir, messieurs," cried the two travellers as they drove out into the street.

And a chorus rose from those they left behind, which sounded cheerily enough:—

"Bon voyage."

The clocks were striking two as Mr. Fudge and his friend drove away from M. Grandal's door. They had now to go in search of Mazard, after which they must find their way to the Barrière de Fontainebleau, and thence to Corbeil, a distance of about four-and-twenty miles. It has been mentioned that the street in which Mazard resided was a by-street. Of course it did not lie in their route. Indeed, if the truth must be owned, it lay very much out of their route, and was approached by many intricate and difficult ways, along which it was impossible to pass quickly, by reason of the narrowness of the streets and the number of vehicles. It had been agreed in consulting upon the best method of kidnapping the unfortunate Mazard, that the only thing to do was to have recourse to a stratagem, and to seduce him into the carriole under the impression that his former mistress was to be his companion there. So it was arranged that the patissière was to go with them to the Bar-

rier, was then to get down, previously tying Mazard to the back of the seat, that she was to walk a little distance by the side of the vehicle within sight of the dog, and was then gradually to fall behind and get back to Paris as best she could. It was further decided that the dog should be kept tied up where he was till they reached their resting-place for the night, by which time they would be far from Paris. The rest was left to Hope. Mazard was of a philosophical disposition, and there seemed reason to believe that he would find some consolation in the presence of Mr. Pinchbold, of whom he had lately seen so much. At all events it was only a question of time. Each day's journey away from Paris would render the likelihood of Mazard's attempting to escape a less one, while Mr. Pinchbold's hold on his regard might also with each day's journey be rationally expected to increase.

There never was such a day of turmoil as this. It might have been supposed that they had had enough to do already, but their troubles were only beginning. Arrived at the abode of Mazard there was a dreadful scene to go through with the old lady, the mother of the dog's owner, who raved and wept by turns, and swore that the dog should never go. Mr. Fudge, who did not like to leave the horse, which it may be here mentioned appeared to be in a high state of fidgetiness and nervous irritability, was obliged to exchange incivilities from the interior of the carriole with the old lady, threatening her with the law, and brandishing her daughter's receipt before her eyes. Even after this injured personage had been somewhat quieted by these means, and still more by witnessing with her own eyes the payment of the second half of

the purchase-money, there was still much time lost in certain compliments exchanged between her and her daughter respecting the guardianship of the sum of money which Mr. Pinchbold had just parted with.

Of course all this had not taken place without the assembling of a considerable number of that class of persons, who are ever represented in the public streets, who take a profound interest in the affairs of other people. No person living, perhaps, had a greater objection to becoming an object of popular interest than our friend Mr. Fudge. The reader may therefore imagine what he underwent while awaiting the final delivering up of Mazard outside the pastrycook's shop. The persons assembled about the door seemed fully aware of all that was going on, and were not sparing in their comments upon the venality of the patissière in parting with her dog, and in speculations as to what the Englishmen meant to do with it, one party holding that they would turn him into a show, and another maintaining, equally strongly, that they intended—as was the manner of the English nation—to eat him. In the midst of all these discussions, and numerous jeering remarks as to the loss of sous that would accrue to the establishment in consequence of the sale of Mazard, the fair proprietress of that animal ascended to her place in the interior of the carriole, where the dog was placed beside her, and the vehicle was, amidst the gibes of the populace and the curses of the old lady in the pastrycook's shop, once more got under weigh, to Mr. Fudge's intense relief. As to Mazard, nothing could exceed at present his satisfaction at what was going forward. He seemed to imagine that the

carriole, everything it contained, and the horse that drew it, were all his own property, and were assembled for his special benefit and glorification, as he stood there balancing himself, with his legs very far apart, on the top of a box, yelping and barking with all his might.

It was about this time that the conduct of the little horse began to develop itself in rather an unpleasant manner. Whether it was that the noise made by the triumphant Mazard was new and distasteful to him—whether he had a presentiment that a long journey was before him, or from what other cause, it is not necessary to inquire—but certain it is that he was in a very bad humour, and that he took every possible opportunity of showing it. He had managed to discover, by that extraordinary power which horses possess, the bearings of his stable, and at the corner of every street which led in this direction there was a struggle, the horse wanting to go one way, and his driver resolved upon going the other.

"What is he about?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, as the ill-disposed animal made a sudden plunge in a direction altogether opposed to that which it was their business to pursue. "He seems to be beginning rather badly."

Mr. Fudge made no answer, all his faculties being absorbed in the efforts requisite for the avoidance of a collision with some one of the numerous vehicles by which they were surrounded, and against which the little horse threatened by his irregular proceedings to bring them from time to time in contact. They were now traversing the long Boulevard near the Barrière

d'Enfer (as our gay allies have cheerfully named one of the southern entrances to their town), when the little horse, catching sight of one of the large thoroughfares which leads from the barrier just named towards the centre of the town, made a sudden rush at it, conceiving no doubt that his stable lay in that direction. Mr. Fudge, of course, pulled him up with all his force; but the little horse had a hard mouth, and Mr. F. was obliged to have recourse to the safety rein, which it has been mentioned above had been added just before they started. This rein having a much more powerful action on the curb than that ordinarily used, the horse was brought up instantly; but as if resenting the application of so severe a measure, and being equally ready to turn in any direction but the right, he now flung himself to the other side, and a fiacre happening at that moment to be passing rather closely by them, he managed to bring himself and a portion of the carriole in pretty sharp contact with its wheels.

There was no harm done; but the driver of the fiacre swore, Mademoiselle the patissière screamed, and Mazard barked as if everything were coming to an end. As for Mr. Pinchbold, it has been remarked at the commencement of this narrative that his terrors were mainly awakened by distant and improbable contingencies; while at times, when there really seemed some present cause for alarm, he would appear, inconsistently enough, tolerably ready for the encounter.

As for the patissière, the scheme of her gradual separation from Mazard seemed likely to fall through, as she expressed her firm determination not to pro-

ceed, after what had occurred, a single inch farther in the carriole. There was nothing for it, then, but to put her down at once—a proceeding to which Mr. Fudge was but little opposed, as her expressions of alarm at every fresh offence on the part of the little horse confused and irritated him. There was no time for leave-takings. The young lady was deposited at the side of the Boulevard, the carriole moved on, and the separation between Mazard and his mistress was effected.

For some time the dog did not appear to realize fully that his mistress was altogether separated from the vehicle, but when he at last began to discover that this was so, our two friends soon found that their anticipations of the distressing nature of such a parting were rather under than over the mark. The poor dog presented indeed a spectacle of great misery, sometimes moaning and whining as he looked up with an expostulatory air into Mr. Pinchbold's face, and sometimes straining at the cord which held him confined.

Surely our friends were having a nasty time of it. The little horse was still going on in the most obstreperous manner, pulling first to one side, then to the other, alternately slackening his pace till he almost came to a dead stop, and then bolting suddenly forward at a furious pace, besides incessantly tossing his head in the most aggravating manner, and making incessant efforts with his tail to get the reins underneath that appendage of his frame. It was as much as Mr. Fudge could do to preserve anything like a straight course. To make matters worse, our travellers managed now to take a wrong turning, and after

proceeding down a long avenue which led to one of the barriers, they found, after they had passed through it, that they were on the Orléans route instead of that which led to Fontainebleau. To have to turn back so late in the afternoon, giving the little horse the additional chance of misbehaviour which this apparent concession to his struggles stable-ward might suggest, was really almost unbearable. Those persons who are of an irritable fibre will be able to conceive that at such a juncture the yelpings and whinings of the unhappy Mazard were almost an unbearable addition to the troubles of our unfortunate travellers. As if, too, to culminate their trials, the men on guard at the barrier which they were now obliged to pass in re-entering the town, made every demonstration of a determination to search their vehicle, though it had only a few seconds before passed out of the gate; nor was it without the most tremendous exertion on the part of the two Englishmen that they were able to persuade the Douaniers that they were not likely to have picked up any exciseable goods in a drive of a hundred yards and back again outside the gate.

As they drove once more towards the heart of Paris, the little horse, now straining and pulling to get on; Mazard uttering the most unearthly cries in the back of the carriole; and both gentlemen utterly worn out with the events of the day and their long fast, for they had had nothing since an early breakfast—at this time the Cruise upon Wheels seemed once more in danger of an abrupt termination, and the chances of its carrying out, like a clipped guinea, trembled in the scale.

The greatest credit was due at this time to Mr.

Pinchbold. If that gentleman had now expressed a wish to abandon a project against which so many obstacles seemed, from the first, to have placed themselves in array; if at this moment, when everything seemed more than ever discouraging, he had urged his friend to return, the chances are that Mr. Fudge would have offered no opposition to his wishes. That gentleman had seen, which Mr. Pinchbold had not, the determined shy of which the little horse had been guilty on the first day of his purchase. He remembered also the gravity which M. Grandal, who had spent his life among horses, had attached to this offence, and taking these things in connexion with the conduct of the beast to-day, it certainly did appear to him, that for a journey such as theirs, where the driver wished to have his attention free, and to have eyes occasionally for other things besides his horse's ears, they had scarcely got hold of an animal suited to their purpose. If Mr. Pinchbold, then, had spoken at that moment, it is not improbable that there might have been an end of the journey. But he did not speak, and they persevered.

They persevered at the point where the wilful little beast had once more to be turned away from his stable. They persevered against all his indications of obstinacy, his startings aside, his stoppages, his boltings forward. They persevered, till they got at last through the Barrier—the right one this time—and out upon the straight paved road, between the lines of trees, the road to Fontainebleau. But it was late, very late in the afternoon, and the travellers were so exhausted that they were obliged to have recourse to a snack of biscuits and brandy. Mr. Pinchbold feeding his com-

panion (whose hands were both occupied with the reins) with morsels which had been previously thoroughly steeped in the contents of the flask. The stimulant of which the travellers had partaken, restored the use of speech to Mr. Pinchbold, whom recent events had apparently deprived of the power of articulating.

"We are going," said that gentleman, "to our doom. I do not the least object to it; but I feel a presentiment that we have not long to live."

"Things must be looking up," thought Mr. Fudge, "or Francis Pinchbold would not be in such utter despair."

"When I think," continued Mr. P., "of all we have to pass through, and observe the conduct of this detestable animal, under circumstances so little trying, I can see but one termination to our course."

"He is certainly," said Mr. Fudge, speaking, however, in a cheerful tone, for the biscuit steeped in brandy (a medicament, by the bye, which we strongly recommend to the reader when he is going, like Messrs. Fudge and Pinchbold, "to his doom,") had done him good, "he is certainly a hateful little miscreant."

"What can we expect," continued Mr. Pinchbold, on whom the snack had produced an effect the reverse of that which it had had upon his friend, "what at least can *I* expect but misery, in return for having kidnapped and led away from a happy home and a sphere which he adorned, this miserable animal who is yelping and groaning behind us?"

"How does he look?" asked Mr. Fudge; "I am afraid to turn round."

"He is most wretched," answered Mr. Pinchbold;

"he is at the end of his tether, and is gazing up at me with an expression which makes me feel the most culpable of human beings. Poor Mazard!" continued Mr. P., patting his head. But the dog only answered with a yelp of distress.

"I wonder when, and in what form, the doom will fall," resumed Mr. Pinchbold. "Whether we shall be run away with down hill and dashed to pieces, or cast over a bridge into a raging torrent, or thrown down a precipice."

"He is going better now," remarked Mr. Fudge.

"All deception," replied Mr. Pinchbold. "He is only lying in wait, to be guilty of fresh atrocities by-and-by."

From the time that the travellers had got at last completely clear of Paris, the little horse appeared to have made up his mind to the situation, and had shown a decided inclination to conduct himself better than he had done in the streets of the metropolis.

"What shall we call him?" asked Mr. Fudge, as they were jogging along.

"The Destroyer," suggested Mr. Pinchbold, cheerfully.

"He has destroyed nothing yet," argued Mr. Fudge; "we must not stigmatize him with such a title till he has deserved it. You must try again."

Mr. Pinchbold tried again, more than once. All his suggestions, however, were of the same gloomy nature as the first, and Mr. Fudge would have nothing to say to them.

"Well, then," said Mr. Pinchbold, at last, "give him a name yourself."

Mr. Fudge pondered for a moment, and then said:

"There is a certain portion of this animal's costume —if I may call it so—which has struck me as singularly out of proportion to his frame. I have observed that in reducing the rest of Bijou's harness, M. Grandal has left the *blinkers* untouched, and consequently that those appendages are of enormous magnitude.

"Now, what I have to suggest is, that just as a man who mounts a pair of immense gills is quite certain to be called among his intimates by the name of 'Collars,' so we, in like manner, should call this little beast of ours by the familiar name of BLINKERS!"

Mr. Pinchbold had only to object that the name was not enough suggestive of dark and sinister conduct to be expected from the animal. He admitted, however, that he had himself been struck by the great size of the blinkers worn by the little horse, and he reminded Mr. Fudge that when, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Bailey appears clad in one of the boarder's cast-off shirts, a facetious gentleman gave him the title of "Collars" on the spot. So the name was adopted.

"Yes," said Mr. Fudge, correcting a sudden plunge in the direction of a lane leading out of the main road made by the animal who had just been the subject of conversation, "you shall be called Blinkers, and you may think yourself well off that it is no worse."

The attempt on the part of Blinkers to diverge from the main road, which has just been mentioned, was by no means a single and isolated instance of perversion. It was one of the most singular and aggravating characteristics of this remarkable animal, that he never could resist a turning; lead where it

would, be the nature of the road what it might, at it he invariably went directly he caught sight of it. At a more advanced period of the journey, and when a longer and more intimate acquaintance between Blinkers and his driver had become developed, this peculiar weakness became the subject of a sort of standing joke between them. The horse got at last to know and acknowledge his master, and to obey his voice as well as his hand. Then would Mr. Fudge purposely slacken the rein as they approached a turning. Blinkers, according to an established form, would make a sidelong movement towards it; Mr. F. would utter a cry of remonstrance, and Blinkers, laying back his ears, and with a vicious shake of the head, would return at once to the straight course, doing so, however, under protest, and with a distinct assertion that he meant to have a try at the next turning, notwithstanding.

The fact is that Blinkers was an Irish horse, a fact which the connoisseur will recognise as at once a point in his favour. He had, perhaps, something of Irish character about him. He was impulsive, irritable, alternately elated and depressed, and very easily bored. The long straight roads of France were peculiarly capable of developing this quality; and hence, perhaps, his readiness to take any chance of a diversion to right or left that might offer *en route*. All these things, however, were, at the point of the journey where we now are, but imperfectly developed, and Blinkers was still an object of suspicion to both our travellers, an animal whose every movement it was necessary to watch and observe carefully.

The road which the little party—for we must be allowed henceforth to regard Mazard and Blinkers as members of the group, of which Mr. Fudge and his friend occupy the principal place—the road which they were pursuing was one of those which are so common in France, and which afford but little interest to the traveller. In a word, it was a broad straight road, paved in the middle with a pavement so rough that it almost jolted the bones out of their sockets to drive over it. On each side of this pavement there was a strip of even more impracticable roadway, abounding in holes deeply rutted, and well sprinkled with loose stones. On either side of the road was a row of trees, and beyond these a flat and uninteresting country—at least, the writer is obliged to call it so, in deference to what would be the general opinion on the subject. As far as his own views go, he may briefly remark, that though acquainted with many miles of uninteresting town, he hardly knows of a hundred yards of country destitute of some quality or other that can touch or delight a true lover of Nature.

So they travelled on along this straight road, till at last, as the evening fell, they came in sight of what looked, at a distance, like a large village, or perhaps a small town. Our travellers instantly concluded that this place was Corbeil, their place of destination for the night. The wish was father to the thought. For the last few miles Blinkers had given the most evident and unequivocal signs of fatigue. He had been now a long time without eating, besides having been probably much under-fed at the *manège*. He had also worn himself out with his own bad

behaviour in the streets of Paris; in short, the little beast hung his head, and seemed very much done for. It was time they arrived at their resting-place. Mazard was also, by this time, thoroughly worn out, and had for some time ceased to utter any audible sound. He was, however, not asleep, but was sitting blinking in a disconsolate manner in his place at the back of the carriole. As to Mr. Fudge and his companion, to say that they were fatigued, and to say that they were hungry, would be to convey but a small idea of the utterly floored and ravenous condition in which they found themselves.

"What a place!" said Mr. Pinchbold, as they passed a wretched-looking auberge, with the words "A l'Ecu de France," just discernible in the twilight on the broken plaster of its walls. "I am glad we are not going to stop there. The name of the inn we were to sleep at at Corbeil is the Grand Cerf."

"Do you know," said Mr. Fudge, "I'm beginning to fear that this place is not Corbeil; it seems so very small, and quite a poor village."

"Good heavens! what are we to do then?" said Mr. Pinchbold.

"What is the name of this place?" said Mr. Fudge, addressing a wheelwright who was watching them from his door.

"It is called Ris," said the man.

"And Corbeil?"

"It is eight kilometres," answered the wheelwright.

Mr. Fudge thanked him, and, with some difficulty, persuaded Blinkers to move on once more.

"Eight kilometres," muttered Mr. Fudge; "six English miles."

"What are we to do?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, again.

"We must push for it," said Mr. Fudge; "there is no other plan. We cannot stop here."

Just outside the little village of Ris, it happened that the road began to ascend a hill of some considerable extent and steepness lying beyond. At the foot of this hill Blinkers came to a dead stand, and intimated, as plainly as a horse could, that he did not mean to go any farther.

"We must go back to the Ecu de France," said Mr. Fudge.

"Then," replied Mr. Pinchbold, "all is over."

"I don't know," continued Mr. Fudge, "that we shall be under the necessity of passing the night there."

"It will be our last if we do," remarked Mr. Pinchbold.

"But," resumed Mr. Fudge, "a rest and a feed of corn are absolutely indispensable for this tired animal. Whether he will be able to go on or not afterwards remains to be seen."

It was a curious thing, that quite the worst place, the lowest in the scale of inns, at which our friends had stopped should be at a distance of less than twenty miles from that centre of civilization, Paris. So it was, however; when Blinkers had been put into the stable, and the travellers—Mr. Pinchbold leading Mazard by a string—entered the kitchen of the auberge, both gentlemen agreed that the Ecu de France was not the kind of place to pass a comfortable night in.

"Dirt, fleas, damp sheets, and nothing to eat," suggested Mr. Fudge.

"Robbery, murder, concealment of the bodies, defeat of the ends of justice," replied Mr. Pinchbold, giving his view of the case, as Mr. Fudge had just enunciated his.

An old woman and a young girl were the only occupants of the kitchen. Neither of them seemed either glad, or sorry, or surprised at the arrival of the two Englishmen. The old woman was despondent on the subject of supper, and though the young girl seemed to have some vague idea that it was consistent with the nature of things that an omelette, some wine, and some bread might be forthcoming in the course of time, she appeared, it must be owned, rather uncertain as to how much of the commodity just mentioned would have to elapse before these luscious viands would be ready for use.

What a contrast to the first night of their previous journey! Their arrival at St. Omer was certainly a more promising beginning than this.

What is the reason that one associates the idea of so much that is evil with the notion of a French auberge? How is it that the very name calls up visions of ruffians in blue blouses, with dangerous knives in their capacious pockets, sitting plotting together, with a bottle of sour wine before them? How is it that one expects to find in the French cabaret an assembly of personages so different from the occupants of an English alehouse? Is there anything of prejudice in this? Is there, in truth, no more harm beneath the blouse than under the smock-frock? Is the Frenchman's clasp-knife in reality intended, like that of the British peasant, to do execution only upon a morsel of cheese-rind or a scrap of

bacon? Perhaps, after all, the suspicion with which one looks upon the frequenters of these French taverns is attributable in no small degree to those numerous stories and dramas so common in France, in which the scene of every sort of diabolical crime and outrage is invariably laid in the roadside auberge. When the curtain rising to the strains of an ominous and trembling symphony, discloses the dimly-lighted interior of a cabaret, with its bare wooden tables and benches, its trap-door leading to the cellar beneath, and its wooden staircase conducting to the bedchamber above, what kind of action do we expect in the drama which is in course of presentation? Do we not settle ourselves in our places with a wriggle of anticipation? Do we not look at each other with a ghastly smile, and mutter, "Now for the murder?" Nor are we disappointed. The whole audience would take it hard if they were not treated to a group of conspirators, seated round that table, right of centre, if the unwary young traveller did *not* enter by door in flat, did *not* seat himself at that other table left of centre, if he did *not* throw aside his cloak, disclosing a massive chain attached to a presumptive watch, if he did *not* call cheerily for wine, if the landlord was *not* called Pierre, was not in league with ruffians at table, R. C. If he did *not* drug the wine, doing so in a conspicuous position, so that the traveller with the presumptive watch need only turn his head to catch him in the act. If, we say, these things did not happen, the audience would be ill-satisfied, and would conceive that this auberge was an unworthy and degenerate one, and that the dramatist who had thus baulked them was unskilful in his craft.

And yet, granting that this impression of the invariable truculency of the French roadside tavern is derived from what goes on behind the footlights, or within the covers of the romance, what comfort can the wanderer in French by-ways derive from that consideration? What is the literature or the drama of a nation but a representation of its habits and character? If these cabarets are so universally selected as the natural sphere of robbery, kidnapping, and murder, it surely naturally follows that there must be some foundation in Fact for what is so constantly found in Fiction. It is preposterous to suppose that there could be a universal conspiracy to brand these haunts of the French lower class with an undeserved stigma of disgrace, or to make, without rhyme or reason, out of a place at worst of boisterous conviviality, a Pandemonium of conspiracy and crime.

Mr. Pinchbold was fresh from Paris, where, in the course of some of the visits which he and his friend had paid to the theatre, he had seen every sort of horror and villany perpetrated in inns which, it must be owned, were the exact image and counterpart of that in which he now found himself. What wonder if the worthy gentleman was somewhat disturbed?

Behind the kitchen of the Ecu de France there was an immense cold black-looking apartment, destitute of all furniture except certain common wooden tables and forms, and into this exhilarating place, lighted by one small candle, our travellers were shown to await the appearance of the meal which they had ordered. Of this meal occasional harbingers were brought in to keep hope alive in their breasts—a knife, a fork, a couple of glasses, a fragment of a loaf, which had

been cut with a dirty knife (the same knife probably which had been plunged into the salt and left its mark behind it to commemorate the fact), these were some of the instalments which were given, something on the same principle which actuates those managers of small theatres who keep on ringing the prompter's bell at intervals long before the curtain rises, in order to pacificate the impatient populace, and persuade them that the fun is just going to begin.

Simultaneously with the appearance of the omelette which our friends had ordered, there entered the room in which they were seated, a couple of men in blue blouses, who, after staring wildly at the travellers, retired to the other end of the apartment, and there placing themselves at a table with a bottle of brandy between them, began to talk in muttered tones to each other, glancing continually towards the two Englishmen as they did so.

Now this was not exactly the kind of thing to suit the peculiar temperament of our friend Mr. Pinchbold. He could make out just so much of what they said as informed him that they were waiting for some friends to join them; the rest was lost, as their voices sunk into a whisper. Whenever, too, Mr. Pinchbold happened to look round, he invariably found that the two men were staring at his friend Mr. Fudge and himself, and he observed that when they stared most, then also they whispered most. Once, too, when he looked in the direction of the blue-bloused men, Mr. P. found that the most ill-looking of the two was playing in an ominous manner with a knife, the edge of which he was testing with his thumb.

"Members of a gang, evidently," thought Mr.

Pinchbold to himself; "they are waiting here for some addition to their numbers, and then——"

"How should you like to sleep here?" inquired Mr. Fudge at this moment.

"Sleep here!" echoed his companion; "what a horrible idea."

"I don't know whether it will be necessary," resumed Mr. Fudge, "but I think we might do worse."

With these words, Mr. Fudge rose from the table and made his way out into the yard to look after Blinkers. Mr. Pinchbold, now left alone, began to occupy himself in feeding Mazard with some remnants of certain cutlets which neither he nor his friend had been able to masticate. The dog, however, seemed to have no appetite, and a few morsels were all that Mr. Pinchbold could persuade him to swallow.

"If Mazard goes on fretting like this," thought Mr. P., "we shall have to send him back to Paris; it was an inhuman act to take him away."

"I am afraid," said Mr. Fudge, entering at this moment, "that it will be very imprudent to attempt going on to-night."

"Just Heaven!" ejaculated Mr. Pinchbold.

"Blinkers is a good deal tired, and to put it on no more humane ground, I think there is no worse policy than knocking a horse up at first starting. I find that Corbeil lies out of the main road, and that it is not necessary that we should pass through it at all. By remaining here to-night, we might still get to Fontainebleau to-morrow. The little horse looks so comfortable in his stable, that I really think it would be cruel to take him further."

"Let us have no more cruelty," said Mr. Pinchbold, "whatever we do. We have enough of that upon our consciences in connexion with this wretched dog; I cannot make him out."

"I am not surprised at that," said Mr. Fudge, "and, indeed, I should have thought it a bad trait in him if he had manifested more indifference in parting with his former owner. He will get all right in time, and the life of change and movement we are leading is very favourable for him."

It was at a time like this that Mr. Fudge and his friend felt what a disadvantage they were at in travelling so late in the season. It was now the second of October, exactly one month and a day since they had first started from Malaise. It was very cold in the evenings now, and it was very difficult to know how to occupy that portion of the day. By the time that they had paid a visit to the stable, where Blinkers, having finished his oats, was now made snug for the night with a good provision of hay and a famous straw bed, by the time that, with the aid of a lantern, they had unpacked what they required from the carriole, there really seemed nothing to be done but to go to bed. There was a smouldering fire in the kitchen, by which they sat for a time, while Mr. Fudge smoked his pipe, and Mr. Pinchbold, with an ink-bottle tied to his button-hole like a tax-gatherer, made some entries in his journal. They were evidently, however, in the way here, and accordingly it was not long before they came to the conclusion that, as they had to start early the next morning, they had better retire for the night at once. So Mr. Fudge rapped out the contents of his pipe

upon the hearth, and Mr. Pinchbold concluded his day's entry as follows :—

"We are now going to bed. We are about to ascend a dark and secret staircase, which leads to the upper story of this terrible abode. Who knows if we shall descend it again alive? The ruffians who were present at our evening meal have been in and out of the kitchen where we have been sitting all the evening, evidently on the look-out to ascertain our movements. Other ruffians have been also backwards and forwards about the premises continually. The people of the inn say that they are carriers who have put up here for the night. Of this, however, I do not believe one word. I feel singularly calm and tranquil, considering the horrors of our position."

There was but one bedroom available for the use of our two travellers. It was, however, a very large one, with three great, gaunt wooden bedsteads in it. Two of these had been made, for the use of Mr. Fudge and his friend; the third was left disclosing that spectral appearance of woodwork and sacking which should always be kept concealed from the human eye.

"Be very careful," said Mr. Pinchbold, as he entered, carrying his carpet-bag in his arms, and with Mazard tied to him by his string; "be very careful in locking the door, and I will attend to the barricade afterwards."

"I don't know," answered Mr. Fudge, "how the barricade may answer, but I am not, I confess, sanguine about the fulfilment of your first suggestion, for the simple reason that there is no lock in the door."

"Then," said Mr. Pinchbold, "I sit up all night."

"What is the use of that?" said Mr. Fudge.

"The use of it is," answered his companion, "that I prefer meeting my fate in a conscious rather than an unconscious state."

"I am of a different opinion," remarked Mr. Fudge, as he began undressing. "These sheets," he continued, "are, as I predicted, saturated with water."

"May they never be saturated with gore!" remarked Mr. Pinchbold, in a hollow tone.

"They are that also," remarked his friend, "for I have just succeeded in spilling that of a flea which for corpulence and length of stride I have never seen equalled."

"This is a nice prospect," said Mr. Pinchbold, who was sitting on the side of the unmade bed. "A strange auberge on a lonely road, filled with a horde of ruffians, a candle about an inch long, a door that wont lock——"

"Damp sheets and fleas of unprecedented magnitude," interrupted Mr. Fudge, who now proceeded, in deference to his companion's wishes, to fortify the door by the simple process of sticking a corkscrew into it just above the latch. This done, Mr. Pinchbold in turn set himself to work in earnest at the barricade. He was some time achieving it to his satisfaction, Mazard watching him intently throughout the whole process, and till the final washing-basin was balanced in its usual position. At this point he uttered one long dismal yell, and the candle, which had been for some time spluttering and fizzing in the socket, finally expired.

"What a fearful state of things!" said Mr. Pinchbold, as he struck a light and began wandering about the room, holding the match in his hand. "Where is the lantern?" he inquired of Mr. Fudge, who was by this time in bed, and provokingly sleepy.

"Burnt out, too," muttered Mr. Fudge, only half intelligibly.

It was too true. Misfortunes never come alone—the lantern had burnt out, and, in the hurry of leaving Paris, the providing a reserve of candles had not been thought of.

Mr. Pinchbold seated himself once more upon the barren bedstead, with the box of allumettes in one hand and the lighted match in the other, and continued for a while to keep hope alive with this ghastly counterfeit of an illumination, kindling one match at the ashes of its predecessor till some dozen or so had been consumed. At this point it occurred to him that if he went on thus they would soon be left without the means of striking a light at all, so the match was allowed to expire, and the room was left in utter darkness.

It was at this moment that a door at the foot of the stairs was heard to open softly, and a prolonged whispering and muttering of voices became audible. During the whole time that Mr. Pinchbold and his friend had occupied the room which was assigned to them as a sleeping apartment, they had heard that low rumbling and growling of voices underneath them, which always has more or less of a disagreeable sound. The whispering which Mr. Pinchbold heard was now substituted for this hollow murmuring to which they had previously listened. The whispering

at length ceased, and then succeeded the sound of footsteps cautiously ascending the creaking staircase. Mazard uttered a low growl, and Mr. Pinchbold struck another lucifer-match. The two sounds together awakened Mr. Fudge, who was just beginning to doze, and, turning round, he saw Mazard watching at the door with his head very much on one side, and Mr. Pinchbold still sitting on the dismantled bed with an ashy countenance.

"EST-CE ICI?" said a voice in a whisper outside the door.

At this Mazard began barking violently, a sound like smothered laughter was heard without, and the footsteps receded once more, moving, however, apparently, along the passage, and not descending the staircase again to the room below.

"Did you hear that?" asked Mr. Pinchbold, lighting another match, regardless of consequences.

"Yes," answered Mr. Fudge; "I heard some one say, 'Is it here?'"

"How horrible!" gasped Mr. Pinchbold; "and we have only six matches left. What are we to do?"

"Well," replied Mr. Fudge, reflectively, "I think we'd better go to sleep."

"What, after distinctly hearing one of those malignant ruffians from below inquire if it is here that we sleep, evidently with the intention of returning by and by to put an end to us."

"Yes; but that is not exactly the interpretation I had put upon it," replied Mr. Fudge. "It seemed to me that some one who was to sleep in the house was simply inquiring if this was his room; or possibly that, the two Englishmen having been the subject

of much discussion downstairs, some member of the company was interested in knowing in what apartment these two distinguished individuals were to pass the night."

With these words Mr. Fudge addressed himself once more to sleep, and Mr. Pinchbold to that chill and rarely achieved proceeding, called "sitting up all night."

It would have been a curious study, if there had been anybody there to witness it, to observe the manner in which Mr. P. carried out his intention. The posture assumed by this gentleman at the commencement of his undertaking was one characterized by the most rigid and uncompromising wakefulness which it is possible to imagine. In a word, he sat bolt upright, with his arms folded, and with his eyes staring intensely into vacancy. It was not long before Mr. Pinchbold began to feel somewhat chilly, so he reached himself a railway rug, and, with the shudder peculiar to those who are sitting up at night, enveloped himself in its folds. The railway rug, by imparting a slight warmth to our good gentleman's frame, seemed to induce the faintest possible approach to a condition of drowsiness. The general rigidity of Mr. Pinchbold's bearing relaxed slightly, and his eyes were perhaps a thought less widely opened than at first. Presently the slight relaxation previously adverted to in Mr. P.'s bearing degenerated into an absolute stoop, and his chin would at times obtain a singular proximity with his knees; then would Mr. Pinchbold start suddenly up more violently rigid than ever, and cough loudly to intimate to society generally that an Englishman—and one, to judge by his

cough, of a powerful and burly presence—was awake and ready for action. That done, Mr. Pinchbold would again collapse with a strange sinking in the abdominal regions; and, having remained some time a practical monument of the extreme amount of curvature of which the human spine is capable, would again start up, and again startle the echoes with the cough of a Yorkshire farmer weighing fifteen stone without his dinner. Gradually Mr. Pinchbold's cough became less frequent; and at the same time it might have been observed—if, as we have said, there had been anybody to observe it—that our worthy friend was occupied from time to time in slow and complicated efforts to unlace his boots, it being a remarkable circumstance that all persons who are going to sit up all night become, at the expiration of the first half hour devoted to that exhilarating pastime, intolerant of every description of clothing, but more especially of those portions of wearing apparel in which their feet are enclosed. After about three quarters of an hour spent in disentangling laces, Mr. Pinchbold succeeded in freeing himself from his boots; after which he might be heard to mutter, that he felt lighter and more wakeful now. It is possible that this was the reason why Mr. Pinchbold edged himself at this point a little farther on to his bed, and it is not improbable that it was with a view of inducing a still greater amount of sprightliness that he next proceeded slowly and gradually to extricate one arm from the restraints of the coat-sleeve which ordinarily covered it. Mr. Pinchbold felt so wakeful after this exploit that he was unable to remain still in a sitting position, and would roll from side to side

whenever he attempted to do so, occasionally at such times hitting himself a good smart blow on the shoulder through bringing that part of his frame into sharp contact with the woodwork of his bed. He also curiously enough would appear to be engaged in acknowledging the presence of numerous phantom acquaintances, nodding and doing obeisance to them in the strangest manner possible. A gentleman so successful in keeping awake as this could surely afford to coil his legs up upon his bed and draw the railway rug over him, after the fashion of a quilt or counterpane. At all events, Mr. Pinchbold did so; and it is only reasonable to suppose that as the night, or rather the morning, advanced farther, still greater developments of wakefulness must have taken place in Mr. Pinchbold's condition, for when Mr. Fudge awoke the next morning he found his friend and companion comfortably ensconced between the sheets, with Mazard curled up upon his feet.

And this is how Mr. Pinchbold achieved his fell determination of "sitting up all night."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUED; THE FOREST; SOME NOTICE OF THE BEAUTIES OF FONTAINEBLEAU; A REFRESHING INCIDENT LEADING TO A SURPRISE; AND THE TERMINATION OF THE FIRST VOLUME OF THIS VERY SIMPLE STORY.

WHAT a delightful thing it would be if life could be all morning. How full of animation and hope we feel at that time. How different is the aspect worn by everything about us to that which the same things present with the dark shade of evening thrown over them. Mr. Fudge had demolished his friend's barricade, and was out in the stable-yard before seven o'clock on the morning of their second day from Paris. Blinkers, to whom he paid a visit at once, was as fresh as a lark; and Mr. Fudge had the satisfaction of seeing him deeply engaged with a double feed of oats before he had been in the stable many minutes. They were to make an early start of it, intending to take a long rest in the middle of the day, and get on to Fontainebleau in the afternoon. Certainly, Mr. Fudge was in his element at a time like this. Busy with preparation, arranging and rearranging perpetually the contents of the carriole, drawing out the ostler on the subject of horses, and questioning him as to the nature of the road which he

and his friend were about to travel; how long it would take them to reach such and such a place; where they ought to stop in the middle of the day, and so on.

It was not long before Mr. Pinchbold made his appearance in the stable-yard, with Mazard at his heels. The poor dog seemed somewhat in a more hopeful condition than on the previous day; but his tail was still not curled so triumphantly as of yore; his walk had less vivacity and animation about it than was right; and he failed to take that intense interest in all the nooks and corners about the place, which characterizes every member of the dog tribe when in a natural and wholesome condition. A slight improvement, however, was all that could be expected; and the old ostler, who professed to have a knowledge of dogs of an unlimited nature, prophesied, on hearing something of Mazard's history, that it would be a good week before he was quite himself again.

There was not much to be done in the way of breakfast at Ris; our travellers waited only for what could be prepared with little delay; and it was not much after half-past seven A.M. when they found themselves once more on the road.

It was quite astonishing what a different view Mr. Pinchbold took of affairs in the morning to that with which he regarded them at night. He was now disposed, in quitting their resting-place, to speak of it in the tone of one who had always regarded it in an amiable and affectionate light. He said it was a rough place, certainly; the people not very civilized, but evidently good people at bottom, and honest as the day.

It was quite an interesting experience to have passed a night at a place of the kind; and Mr. P. was quite glad they had stopped there.

It is a great surprise, and not a pleasant one, to the traveller, to find how universally the roads in this part of France are paved. The shaking and jumbling occasioned by this are fearful. It also strikes one as such a wonderful thing that so vast an undertaking as the paving of all these long roadways could ever, by any human agency, have been accomplished. It takes a long time to pave a street; to pave all these roads about France would, one would have thought, have required more time than has elapsed since the Deluge.

The country improves in point of beauty as Paris gets more distant. A fine view of a bend in the Seine, occurs not far from Penthièvre. This Penthièvre is a large place, and our travellers would have done wisely to stop there for their midday rest; but Mr. Fudge thought they should have accomplished more of their journey before taking any repose. They went on, then, to Caillot, a wretched, deserted-looking village; where, seeing a man, the only inhabitant, apparently, at work in the capacity of wheelwright, they inquired of him where they could best put up their horse, and get something to eat themselves.

"Here," said the man. And with that he began opening the shutters of a closed-up house, next to the wheelwright's shop; then he went round to the back, and unbarred the doors of this same shut-up house, which it seemed was an inn—the man being a pluralist, and combining the functions of wheelwright and innkeeper.

An unpromising place; the man seemed to know nothing about feeding the horse, or anything else. His wife had to be sent for before the travellers could have anything to eat; so as the prospect of a meal seemed a remote one, they determined to beguile the time with a stroll about the village.

In an old, forsaken churchyard, with unburied bones lying about it, routing about among the graves, and enjoying himself prodigiously, there appeared the second inhabitant of the village—an old and very mischievous-looking idiot. An uncouth beggar this, who clamoured greedily for alms, and who, having got a two-sous piece from Mr. Pinchbold, retired with it, grinning and mouthing, to the church-porch, where he seemed to be engaged in hiding it, evidently pretending to himself, to increase his gratification, that he had stolen the money. The third inhabitant of this joyous hamlet whom our friends encountered was another idiot—a young girl this time, who, running swiftly all around and about the place, lifted up her voice in wailings and cries as dreary and terrible to hear, as her wan face and disjointed figure were distressing to look upon. A sane old woman, looking out of window, and addressing a word of comfort to this wretched creature, made up, apparently, with one hen and a very little cur, the population of the place.

Mr. Fudge and his companion went a little way out of the village, and ascending a slight eminence, cast a glance forward towards the direction in which their road lay. A new feature was discernible in the prospect, and one of no small mark and interest. But a few miles on from where they stood, with the last

grey hovels of the village close behind them, the ploughed lands, and the pastures, dotted as they were, and thickly sometimes, with groups of trees—the open country, we say, stopped altogether, and a great, dark, ominous stain, that lay upon the earth like a shadow, stretched to right and left, and on ahead as far as the eye could see.

"It must be the forest," said Mr. Pinchbold, softly.

He was right; the forest of Fontainebleau lay before them. To come upon it so quietly and unexpectedly; to be alone; to have no guides; to be free from the bewilderment of a large party; to have even no noisy explaining friend raving about the scene; to be under a soft grey sky, with the sun veiled for the day in heavy clouds; to look over from that sad village to where the earth was darkened by that great forest, was to come in view of so remarkable a prospect under circumstances peculiarly and rarely favourable. There is something wonderfully and mysteriously attractive even about a wood covering only a few acres of ground; while a forest, be it where it may, or what it may, must always fill us with something of awe as well as of admiration; but when that forest is the forest of Fontainebleau, it is surely impossible for any man but a dunce or a woodcutter to look upon it with anything of indifference in his regard.

Our two Englishmen were both well-read in the history of the country through which they were passing; and as they silently observed the scene before them, each was busy in his own mind with the memory of all that wealth of interest with which the name of Fontainebleau is associated. Every inch of

ground seemed full of historical interest; and those ancient memories that seemed to hang yonder over the forest, would creep even over the intervening space between it and the place where they stood, and make the very road whose stones sustained their weight—the road that connected the old town of Paris with the old hunting-seat of Fontainebleau—the road along which the kings of France, with all their train of courtiers and attendants, must have passed—the road by which messengers must have hurried so often with the slow haste of those days—the road by which the lover must have sped to steal an interview with some maid-of-honour at the Court, fretting in her gilded prison—this road itself became in turn, to both our travellers, a viaduct of the fancy, bridging over the space between the Present and the Past.

It was well that Mr. Fudge and his friend had something whereon at least to feed their minds, for it must be acknowledged that the sustenance provided by the wheelwright's wife, for their bodily support, was but of a low order of merit. A musty beef-steak, musty cutlets, and musty wine, were no great temptations to excess, and a giant cauliflower, on which the travellers were disposed to fall back, was speedily abandoned when Mr. Pinchbold discovered that it had been sent to table without the previous formality of ejecting the slugs from their favourite quarters in the recesses of the stalk. Altogether, then, it was a sorry meal, and what added to its unsatisfactoriness, was the fact that Mazard had not sufficiently recovered his appetite to eat up what Mr. Fudge and his friend could not swallow. The dog was still moping sadly.

In deference to Mr. Pinchbold's wishes, he would certainly make an attempt to eat, an attempt, however, which became abortive, after the first few mouthfuls had, with obvious reluctance, been got down. It was very sad to see him, and Mr. Pinchbold repented more than once, that in his selfish desire to possess him, he had taken the dog away from his own natural sphere where he was enjoying himself after his own manner.

"I wonder," said Mr. Pinchbold, "if he would eat some of his favourite sponge cakes," and it was agreed that the next time they met with any, the experiment should be tried. Meanwhile Mr. Fudge still stuck to his opinion, that time would bring him round.

It was exactly at four o'clock in the afternoon, that the carriole passed by the first tree that marked the commencement of the forest of Fontainebleau. It is not often that an event such as this can be noted with such precision. It commonly happens that the approaches to those places which we have heard and thought much about are very gradual, and their outworks so scattered and far extended, that we can hardly define the actual moment of our obtaining admission within the long anticipated precincts. It is not so with the forest of Fontainebleau, the limits of whose enclosure are at this point as clearly defined as those of an English gentleman's park. As you advance farther into the interior of the forest, and lose sight of the gleam of open country outside, a curious sense of confinement and restraint comes over you, and beautiful as all around you unquestionably is, you feel, in some sort, that those tall trees fence you about and hem you in, and

that you breathe less freely than you did outside. And yet the place is beautiful. The little cleared spaces that you come to now and then, where vast fragments of rock appear so suddenly, and in spots where their presence could be so little anticipated, that they seem rather as if they had been placed in those positions than as if they grew there, and were part of the soil; the little glades which surprise you from time to time, where the ground dips into a valley; the by-paths which, diverging from the main road, sometimes with a notice at the corner recording where they lead to, sometimes with no such guiding indication, invite you to follow their green windings, and losing yourself quickly in the heart of the forest, abandon all hope of a return to civilization; the great stone cross raised at a place where four roads meet, and looking in its colossal size so dim and spectral as you approach it from a distance—all these things are beautiful indeed, but beautiful in that sad and melancholy way which is perhaps the best of all. It was in such a scene that the companion of the banished Duke found food for his unchanging melancholy, and our two friends, as they drove along, took note of this, and asked each other how much of that rough courtier's sadness was attributable to the trees of Ardennes.

The progress of our travellers through the great forest was to both of them full of interest and delight. It was mainly achieved on foot, and it took so long to pause before the points of special interest; so long to peer into this little mysterious glade, where assuredly the fairies come from their hiding-places when the night falls to dance; so long to gaze down that dark vista whose turf the feet of gnomes and wood-

sprites press in their midnight gambols; so long for Mr. Fudge to stand at the horse's head, while Mr. Pinchbold climbed up a rock to get a glimpse of some special prospect, and coming back in raptures, insisted on his friend doing the same, while he took charge of Blinkers—a proceeding which he accomplished by standing directly in front of the animal, and holding a rein tightly in each hand—all these things took so long, that the dusk of the evening was beginning to fall when the two Englishmen found themselves quite suddenly at the entrance to the town of Fontainebleau.

The limits of this town are as definitely marked as those of the forest itself, by which it is girt about. It is curiously situated, not in the neighbourhood of the forest, not on the edge of the forest, or even just within it. It seems to be in the very centre of this vast wood, and there is a sense of confinement, and of imprisonment even, that comes over you as you realize this fully, which would make Fontainebleau (charming and delightful as it is) an impossible place as a residence. Charming and delightful, and almost inconceivably romantic it is, unquestionably, for a time, and till that *longing for a horizon* comes upon you, a more beautiful residing place could hardly be found. But that longing is sure to come. You want to soar above the trees, and see the world beyond, and you strain your eyes along the endless vistas which intersect the forest, in hopes of getting a glimpse of distant hill or plain, with the edge of the round world against the sky.

The Hotel de Paris, where our travellers put up, was a great contrast to the auberge of the previous

night. Mr. Pinchbold, who, in addition to his usual descriptive notices of his bedrooms, has generally something to say of the hotel or innkeeper, and the staff of persons in office under him, makes at Fontainebleau an entry to the following purpose :—

"Patron, another name for landlord, and that generally in use among the servants,—Patron, a youngish man, who lounged about like a guest, and did not seem to take much interest in business; wife, fussy and disagreeable; satirical myrmidons in the hall of the hotel, who presume to smile as my friend and I pass in and out. One agreeable waiter, who, though able to speak English, abstained from cramming that accomplishment down one's throat;—no waiter should answer you in English when you address him in French. The power of speaking English should always be reserved till it is asked for, and it should be a universally respected canon, that the language in which you address any person, should be the language in which that person responds to you. The ostler at this hotel never to be found, but when at length caught, loquacious on the subject of his experiences as coachman to some mythical French count, also prone to relate wonderful things about the horses in the stable, and the fabulous prices which they had cost.

"Bedroom, cheerful and well-lighted," Mr. Pinchbold continues; "two sides exposed to the outer air, and three windows prettily curtained. Bed against wall, with curtains passed through a mahogany ring which hangs from ceiling. Gilt clock, represented as growing in a bronze rock; a youth in the costume of a theatrical page has succeeded in propping himself

up with one elbow on the rock and one foot on the ground; he holds a bluntly-pointed instrument in one hand, and has an open volume before him slipping off the rock, and as he is kicking frantically with one leg, and is grasping idiotically at his chin with the unemployed hand, may be supposed to be composing a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow. The clock of course does not go. A print, called 'l'Amour Maternelle,' so entitled with justice, since nothing but a maternal love verging on the morbid could have induced any woman to have taken upon her knee a child so odious as that represented by the painter of this picture."

It was a pleasant thing, after the privations of Ris, to sit down to a comfortable dinner in a well-lighted and prettily decorated *salle-à-manger*. A visit to Blinkers, and a walk about the town, where Mr. Fudge and his friend had some purchases to make, filled up the evening. Among these purchases were some of those sponge cakes of which Mazard had formerly been so fond. The dog, however, would not touch one of them, but walked away after faintly smelling at the proffered cake, more disconsolately, and with his tail more out of curl than ever.

"I don't know what we shall do with him," said Mr. Pinchbold, despairingly, just after this new instance of Mazard's unhappiness. "He seems to me to be pining; in spite of his thick fur I can see that he is much thinner than he was, and his skin hangs about him quite loosely."

Mr. Fudge looked at the dog carefully under a lamp, for they were standing in the street, and just

outside the shop where the sponge cakes had been bought.

"Try him with a sou," suggested Mr. Fudge.

Mr. Pinchbold took one of these coins out of his pocket and held it out towards the dog. Mazard declined it, just as he had declined the cake; after that, Mr. Fudge made an attempt in his turn—it was equally unsuccessful. The dog steadily declined to go through his old performance under the new circumstances. Mr. Pinchbold did all in his power, and so did his companion. They showed him the cake, they showed him the shop, they showed him the sou, but beyond looking at them wistfully and with a chopfallen countenance, and faintly wagging his tail, the unfortunate Mazard made no response to their appeal. Nay, when they came back to the place after walking for a time about the town, and tried the dog once more, it was still useless, and Mr. Pinchbold was half inclined at one moment to believe that the dog had been changed, so completely ignorant did he seem to be of his former accomplishment, and everything connected with it.

Mr. Pinchbold looked dejectedly at his friend.

"I have an idea," said Mr. Fudge, suddenly; "it is a very fanciful one, too absurd to mention."

"Then, for heaven's sake, mention it!" cried Mr. Pinchbold.

"I was thinking, then," Mr. Fudge answered, "that if you could convey to the dog's understanding an impression that you were in some way connected with the old patissier's shop where he used to live, and that it would even be profitable to you if he was to

deal with you for cakes—but it's too ridiculous," said Mr. Fudge, interrupting himself.

"Not a bit of it," said Mr. Pinchbold; "I believe this dog to be capable of anything, and I am determined to try him.

It being still tolerably early in the evening, there was yet time for Mr. Pinchbold and his friend to begin hunting about the town for the paraphernalia which was necessary for the carrying out of their experiment. After hunting about for some time, our friends found themselves in front of a small shop, which appeared to be a compound of a broker's, a cabinet-maker's, and a carpenter's.

"There is the very thing," said Mr. Pinchbold.

Mr. Fudge looked in the direction indicated by his friend, and saw in an obscure corner of the shop a little upright wooden cabinet of the roughest kind, and something under a couple of feet in height. It was a common-looking thing, with three or four little panes of glass let into the folding-doors, and Mr. Fudge took it into his head that because these little windows were shaped like Gothic arches, that therefore this little shabby cabinet had been some poor nun's bookcase in which she kept her library of devotion. On going into the shop to make inquiry about the cabinet, it proved that Mr. Fudge's hypothesis was likely enough to be a true one, for the old man who owned it said that it had come to him with some other odds and ends of religious furniture, and he believed it had once been in a convent. On opening the little bookcase, it was found to have just one shelf across the middle of it, and was pronounced by Mr. Pinchbold to be just the thing for their purpose.

"And if," he said, coming out of the shop with the bookcase wrapt up in an odd number of the *Indépendance Belge*, "if the poor nun had known the use to which her little bookcase was to be put, I think she would have owned it, at any rate, to be a harmless one, and would have wished us luck in our enterprise."

Mr. Pinchbold and his friend now returned to the pastrycook's shop where they had bought the cakes, and having purchased a good supply of them, proceeded next—in pursuance of his idea of converting the little cabinet into a pastrycook's shop—to secure certain articles which might be considered emblematical of confectionery. There was, and had been in the window of that shop for many a year, a certain fictitious mould of calf's-foot jelly, which on that principle of exaggeration which characterizes all imitations, presented an aspect of brilliancy and transparency so outrageous that no one could possibly have been taken in by it. Having made, to the intense astonishment of the people of the shop, a remunerative offer for this delusive article, and having at once secured it for his own, Mr. Pinchbold next proceeded to treat for a couple of impossible-looking phials of syrup, and a glass of currant-jelly. These things having now become his lawful possessions, Mr. P. released the nun's bookcase from the shelter of the *Indépendance Belge*, and clapped the whole of his newly acquired property into the interior of the cabinet. Mr. Pinchbold had no one to divide with him the intense astonishment of the pastrycook and his family at his proceedings, for his friend Mr. Fudge was waiting outside the door with Mazard in

his charge, it not being considered desirable to admit the dog at this stage behind the scenes. There remained but one more purchase to be made, in the shape of a white apron, and this having been got at the principal haberdasher's shop, Mr. Pinchbold pronounced that his preparations were complete, and marched off with some importance in his step to the stables, to deposit his stock-in-trade in the carriole.

The next morning was one of those which are not uncommon in the month of October, when the air, which would be chilly enough without the sun, retains, in spite of that luminary, a certain sharpness which is like the sparkle of champagne. What a morning for Fontainebleau? What a morning to tip with tender sunlight and veil with luminous shadow the little quaint courtyards of the Palace, and to reveal as you stood upon the terrace every nook and corner of its lovely garden?

For Fontainebleau is surely of all the show places in the world the most completely and almost incredibly lovely. Not Windsor, in all the stateliness of its proud power; not Versailles, imposing, ostentatious, magnificent; not Hampton Court, pregnant with associations, prim and *soigné* in its old-fashioned garb; not any of these can be mentioned even with the praise they merit, till he who has stood upon the terrace of Fontainebleau, who has wandered among its ancient courts, and paced alone or with one cherished friend the paths and alleys of its vast garden, has forgotten his first overwhelming impression and left it in the far distance!

There are few things so delightful as an old garden.

Advance as we may in other matters, we shall never hit upon any scheme for laying out a garden so perfect as that which has been established once for all by those cunning workmen who laid out such pleasure-grounds as those of Versailles and Fontainebleau. The terrace! what an invention alone is the terrace-walk. Whether standing on it and glancing over on the scene below, or walking in the garden and looking up at its stone balustrades, there is something besides splendour, and better than it, conveyed by the notion of a terrace. Its smooth and even gravel seems to perpetuate the sunlight, even though the sun itself may be hidden by the clouds. There are other parts of your pleasure-grounds, such as the walk beside the oblong fish-pond, that are suggestive, though not unpleasantly so, of something pensive and melancholy; but the terrace with its sunshine, the terrace on which the holiday figures, who have passed through the long windows to reach it, are lounging as they watch the sunset, and trifle away the last hour of daylight; the terrace with its grey sundial; the terrace with its flights of steps, on which the peacock suns its foolish beauty; the terrace is all for happiness, for pleasure, for gaiety. One would almost say that no one could pass an unhappy hour upon a terrace-walk, that no one could tell bad news upon a terrace, or speak in bitterness or wrath. Nor is that garden which you overlook from the terrace-heights, and which lies so low and snug under their shelter, to be surpassed in the sense of luxury and comfort which it so strongly suggests. How prosperous and cared for it looks, tended like the children of the rich, groomed like the winner of a

Derby. The differences of station are not developed between man and man alone, we see them unmistakeably enough among the brute creation, and surely there is a high-bred look about those flower-beds in the Palace-garden which indicates a different rank and grade to that held by the little tangled plots of marigold and chrysanthemum behind the auberge at Ris.

Mr. Fudge and his companion spent a long morning at Fontainebleau, and as they passed out of the precincts of the Palace, and noted the fierce tourists assailing the place, led on to the charge by a *valet de place*, whose presence would blast even the beauty of Fontainebleau itself, they were struck with a mixed feeling, of surprise that people should come to that wondrous place and want to know anything about it but what its fair outside revealed, and of profound self-gratulation at their own good fortune in being allowed to explore, unguided and alone, the beauties of this ancient seat.

Enough of it. To the many to whom Fontainebleau is known a further description would be useless, while with regard to those who know it not, if what has been said has conveyed the notion of an old grey building with cool court-yards, leading one out of another, with pointed turrets here and there, round which the pigeons wheel and poise; if it has conveyed the notion of a garden of vast size, sunk within a rampart of terraces for shelter, with numberless flower-beds, with prim gravel walks, with fountains and basins of clear water, where the triton, the river-horse and the nymph are not unknown; a garden that seems to have caught the sunshine, and to hold

it there for ever; if it has suggested a park domain beyond with a chain of oblong pools of water leading out to the forest ground, which hems this paradise about—if this much has been done, and if, above all, it has made the reader long to see the place for himself, it is enough.

A short stage was before our travellers to-day. They were to sleep at Montereau, the scene of one of Napoleon's sieges, about which, however, the reader shall not be bored. The long course of the day before, about six-and-thirty miles, made a short one—and Montereau lay at a distance of fifteen miles only—very desirable. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when the travellers took their last look at the palace, and passed out once more into the forest.

There never was a horse so soon elated and so soon depressed as Blinkers. The morning of the start from Fontainebleau was one of his gloomy periods, and he trotted along with his head down, and every symptom of despair developed in his whole bearing. The fact is that the forest weighed upon him, and kept down his spirits. There could be no doubt about this. Later in the day, and when our travellers had at length got clear of the last trees of that great wood, the little horse plucked suddenly up, and became almost too frisky to be borne.

Before, however, they were out of the forest there was a solemn ordeal to be gone through, and a great performance was to take place, in which Mazard was to take a prominent part.

It had been arranged between Mr. Fudge and his companion that the great experiment of the pastry-cook's shop, the experiment which had induced Mr.

Pinchbold to become the possessor of the nun's bookcase, and had caused him to invest his capital in a mould of artificial jelly, and other matters mentioned above, it had been agreed, I say, that this experiment must be made in private, and in some spot as far removed from human ken as possible.

"Now for it," said Mr. Fudge, pulling up at the side of the road, and preparing to descend.

The place was well chosen. The road was long and straight, so that any one within a mile or so must necessarily have been in sight; a surprise, therefore, was impossible.

Mr. Pinchbold and his friend had determined that in carrying out the commercial transaction in which they were about to engage, they would take no notice at all of Mazard, not calling his attention to what they did, or appearing to have any view of teaching him anything by their performance.

The carriole having been drawn up, then, in a quiet place, and the depression of the little horse's spirits appearing to be highly favourable to the chances of his standing still, our two travellers descended from their seats without further delay, and proceeded at once to business.

First of all, Mr. Pinchbold, with great care and elaboration, lifted the nun's bookcase out of the interior of the carriole, and placed it in a convenient and telling position, with its weight mainly supported on one of the front wheels of the vehicle. Then he took from a place of concealment the white apron purchased on the preceding evening, and fastened it round his body, and it must be owned that, this being accomplished, the worthy gentleman would have looked singularly

like a pastrycook if he had not, for some reason or other, borne a still stronger resemblance to a butterman. The apron having been now thoroughly adjusted, it became Mr. Pinchbold's next duty to open the shop, or, in other words, to unlock the bookcase. The shop was rather in dishabille, Mr. Pinchbold having, for safety's sake, enveloped the more fragile of its contents in numerous papers to prevent them from rattling about; but when these were once removed, and the jelly-mould, the syrup bottles, and the cakes were revealed in all their majesty, the effect was very splendid indeed, and calculated to impress any right-minded dog with the conviction that the object before him was a "Branch Confectionery Establishment" or nothing. Also, had all these proceedings of Mr. Pinchbold's been watched by Mazard with a degree of eagerness and excitement which he had not manifested on any previous occasion throughout the journey.

The "shop" being now fairly open and everything in readiness, Mr. Fudge, who had been walking about at a little distance watching his opportunity, came up to where his friend was standing, looking like a lunatic butterman, and commenced proceedings without further delay. It must be acknowledged that there was something theatrical, almost pantomimic, in Mr. Fudge's way of performing his part. He began by an elaborate and prolonged inspection of Mr. Pinchbold's stock in trade. The calf's-foot jelly, the bottles of syrup, and the cakes having all been carefully examined, Mr. Fudge fixed upon one particular sponge-cake, and pointed it out in a marked and special manner, with his forefinger directed

towards it. Mr. Pinchbold, with equal elaboration, selected this cake from his stock, and, holding it in his hand, descended to the front, in company with his friend, very much as the honest tradesman in a pantomime comes out of his shop and down to the foot-lights with Harlequin, when that unprincipled character is about to play him a trick. Indeed, the whole thing had at this moment a curious look of a pantomime, and had any bystander been looking on he might almost have persuaded himself that it would only take the waving of a wand to turn Mr. Pinchbold into Pantaloon, Mr. Fudge into Harlequin, Mazard into the Fairy Do-good, the carriole into an enchanted car, Blinkers into a dragon, and the Forest of Fontainebleau into the enchanted Palace of Benevolence, all ablaze with pink fire.

Mr. Fudge and his friend then, having taken up a prominent position where all their movements could be perfectly well seen—Mr. Pinchbold, however, still remaining near enough to the "shop" to show his connexion with the business—the transaction which was to put Mr. Fudge in possession of the coveted cake went on without further delay, except that caused by the extreme slowness and care with which the two performers went through their parts. Never was a coin so long in reaching the hand held out to receive it as the sou which Mr. Fudge drew out of his pocket and delivered, after prolonged flourish and much elaborate gesture, to the amateur pastrycook. Never was any piece of goods so slow in delivery as that small article of confectionery which Mr. Pinchbold handed to his friend at last; whilst surely no sponge cake was ever eaten with such ceremony and

demonstrativeness as were brought to bear by Mr. Fudge upon the consumption of this important morsel.

Mr. Fudge, leaning very much forward and conveying his food to his mouth with a marvellous wave of the hand, was just committing the fourth mouthful to that region where its merits could be most fully appreciated, when his purpose was suddenly arrested by the simultaneous occurrence of a violent start on the part of Blinkers, the descent of the "shop" from its position on the wheel, a sharp cry from Mr. Pinchbold, a volley of barks from Mazard, and the apparition on every side of him at once, as it appeared, of a party of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, who had apparently then and there sprung out of the ground for his and his friend's especial discomfiture. The fact is, that though the two Englishmen had chosen their position well in selecting a place where a long extent of road before and behind them was exposed to view, they had at the same time failed to remark that they were just at the entrance of one of those green alleys already spoken of which communicate with other parts of the Forest, and ultimately with the town of Fontainebleau itself. From this green alley, then, whose pavement of turf rendered it peculiarly adapted for purposes of surprise, the party by which our friends found themselves surrounded had emerged. Whether they had been for any length of time spectators of the drama which we have feebly attempted to describe, or whether the first they saw of it was what burst upon their view at the moment when Mr. Fudge was engaged with his cake, while Mr. Pinchbold, girt about in his apron, and standing by

the side of his shop, looked benignly on, it is impossible to say. Mr. Pinchbold affirmed afterwards, however, that he fancied that he had heard a covert laugh at the moment when Mr. Fudge placed the sou in his hand. Be this as it may, it is quite certain that every member of that detested group was on the broad grin; and that one young lady, whom Mr. Pinchbold mentions in his diary as having been gifted with great personal attractions, laughed so much that she could scarcely sit in her saddle.

Mr. Pinchbold was a gentleman of a susceptible disposition, and keenly alive to the importance of making a favourable impression upon that sex of which he was a devoted and respectful admirer. What were his feelings, then, at being discovered surrounded by confectionery properties, and with a flowing white apron firmly girt about him. To whisk this garment off and fling it into the innermost recesses of the carriole, would not, after all, have been much use; but even this subterfuge was not possible, for Mr. Pinchbold had, in his eagerness to get rid of this appendage, entwined the strings into a tight knot. In order, too, to get better at this fastening, the unfortunate gentleman managed to twist the apron round so that it hung at his back. It was unfortunately at this moment that it occurred to this unhappy man that it would be a good plan to veil himself from farther observation by taking refuge in the carriole. Acting upon this impulse, Mr. Pinchbold hastily turned round and commenced a rapid ascent into the vehicle, his apron waving behind him in the breeze. A roar of laughter, in which Mr. Fudge could not help joining, saluted Mr. P.'s retreat; but all was not

over yet, for Blinkers, feeling that some one had ascended the carriole, and taking it into his head that his burden was complete, started suddenly off at a good round pace, and had already got to a considerable distance before Mr. Fudge could overtake and stop him. As if, too, to make the confusion still greater, the whole of what has been described took place to an accompaniment of snarling and barking occasioned by the noble behaviour of Mazard. A large dog, belonging to some member of the equestrian party, seeing that the contents of Mr. Pinchbold's "shop" had been scattered in all directions in consequence of the downfall of that place of business, commenced an instant assault upon some of those sponge-cakes which had been provided for Mazard's especial benefit. A dog so conscientious in paying for everything he consumed as Mazard could not be expected to stand such an unprincipled attack as this upon his master's property. Bristling, therefore, in every hair till he looked more like a porcupine than a dog, Mazard instantly flew at the purloiner of Mr. Pinchbold's goods, and pinned that dishonourable animal by the throat. A furious combat ensued, but virtue was triumphant; and when our two friends returned with the carriole in search of the "shop" and its contents, they found Mazard alone mounting guard over the *débris*, his opponent and the cavalcade to which he belonged being by this time far away in the distance.

Mr. Pinchbold was in despair. He vowed that the memory of this horrible mischance would haunt him to his last hour; that he would retire from the world, and hide in some obscure corner, where no one should

ever see or hear of him again. It was very well for Mr. Fudge, who had had no ridiculous apron fastened round him, nothing to hide except a morsel of sponge-cake—this morsel, by the bye, Mr. Fudge found, to his astonishment, several hours afterwards in his trousers-pocket—but for him (Pinchbold) the case was different. To be seen by all these people, and by *her*, with that disgusting apron clinging about him, standing by the side of a portable cupboard full of cakes and jellies, in the middle of a forest!

"She was beautiful, too!" said Mr. Pinchbold, after a pause, and speaking now in tones of calm despair—"she was beautiful!"

The interruption which had brought that transaction in the cake trade, which we have attempted to describe, to so sudden a termination, did not take place till all the more important parts of the drama which our two friends had been enacting were concluded. As regarded the education of Mazard, then, no harm had been done by the violent "shutting up" of Mr. Pinchbold's shop. Nothing could exceed the intense and tremendous interest with which the dog had watched the progress of the little pantomime, which had been got up for his benefit, from beginning to end, and both Mr. Fudge and his friend conceived the most sanguine hopes of the effect which it might be expected to produce. It had been agreed, however, between them that some time should be allowed to elapse, and that at least one more repetition of the performance should take place before any attempt should be made to ascertain how far Mazard had been enlightened by what he had seen.

Mr. Pinchbold and his friend set themselves to

work to pick up the shop and its contents, which, beyond the abstraction of one cake by the strange dog, and the breakage of one of the bottles of syrup, had not suffered any damage. As they were thus engaged, Mr. Pinchbold would from time to time address his stock in trade in terms of deep and pathetic reproach.

"In an evil hour," he said, "oh, book-case ecclesiastical, did my eye light on thee! In an evil hour wert thou converted from thy former reverend office into a receptacle for cakes, for jelly-moulds, and the like wretched wares! Woe to thee, and to the timber of which thou wert made, for thou hast betrayed me into the most ludicrous mischance into which ever man fell!"

Our travellers now betook themselves once more to the carriole, and it was not long before they began to discover unmistakeable signs of their being near the edge of the forest, and about to emerge once more into the open country. It was at this time that a marked change became manifest in the behaviour of Blinkers, a degree of alacrity and impetuosity developing itself in his "running," which formed a striking contrast to the despondency which had oppressed him while in the inclosure of the forest.

Mr. Fudge and his friend were now beginning to have a better understanding of the little horse. The extraordinary caprices to which he had given way on the afternoon when they left Paris had been followed by a day of such good behaviour, that the confidence of our two travellers in their new purchase was in a measure restored. Of course, Mr. Fudge could not

fail to perceive that the horse he was driving was a very different animal from the phlegmatic and docile Bijou, but still he saw no signs of absolute vice in Blinkers, and as long as a horse is not vicious, the recurrence of occasional fits of friskiness is rather amusing than otherwise. Blinkers ran away from the forest of Fontainebleau as if the place was haunted, and all the wood demons in full pursuit of him; and when Mr. Fudge wanted to pull him up, in order that he might purchase some grapes in a village which lay in their way, it was really quite a difficult matter to arrest his progress, or to hold him still while the bargain for the grapes was being effected.

This purchase of grapes was one of those little indications of progress in their journey for which our travellers were always on the look out. It was one of the chief attractions of a journey such as this, that the advance made was so slow and gradual, that the two Englishmen were able to note the difference even between one department and another, and to detect even the smallest gradation that marked their approach to some new kind of scenery.

They were among the vineyards. They were in the middle of France. They were buying more delicious grapes than they could eat for three halfpence. The vineyards were all around them, and as far as they could see; even when, after they had rattled through Moret, they paused on the brow of the hill which overlooks the great plain in which Montereau is situated, the chief feature of the landscape was still found in the presence of the vineyards. It is well to say that French vineyards are mere fields of currant-bushes; one knows that they are *not* currant-bushes,

and the resemblance did not make our travellers feel in the least less convinced that they were travelling through a new country, and that the sun of the south was shining on them, though with its most widely-extended rays.

There certainly never was anything like the little horse's impatience that day. While Mr. Fudge and his friend were looking at the view, and admiring the winding of the Seine in the valley, and the curious range of hills stopping so abruptly above the town, Blinkers was fretting and stamping, just as anxious for more work as if the two previous days' journeys had been nothing more than a drive in the Champs Elysées. The hill descended, the drag taken off, everything seemed favourable to his desire of getting on. At this time, too, our travellers were overtaken and passed by the first vehicle which they had seen that day. It was a very light cabriolet, drawn by an immense and powerful horse, who stepped along as if he were winning a trotting match. There was no holding in Blinkers after this equipage had passed. Regardless of the difference between himself and the gigantic animal whose pace he was emulating, and of that which existed between the cabriolet and the carriole, he set off after it, and it was all Mr. Fudge could do to keep this excitable animal from running his ambitious nose into the back panels of the vehicle which preceded them. This headlong race lasted for nearly an hour, and would doubtless have continued much longer if it had not happened that, at the expiration of the period just named, the cabriolet turned suddenly off into a lane leading in a direction exactly contrary to that which our travellers were pursuing.

This stimulating contest had, however, brought them so rapidly on their way, that they found themselves at its conclusion at the entrance to the town much earlier than they anticipated; and so, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, they turned into the open gates of the Hotel du Grand Monarque at Montereau.

END OF VOL. I.

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